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Islam and the Army in Colonial India

Sepoy Religion and the Service of Empire

Nile Green



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Islam and the Army in Colonial India

A ground-breaking study of the cultural world of the Muslim soldiers of colonial India. Set in Hyderabad in the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the book focuses on the soldiers' relationships with the *faqīr* holy men who protected them and the British officers they served. Drawing on Urdu as well as English sources, the book uses the biographies of Muslim holy men and their military followers to recreate the extraordinary encounter between a barracks culture of miracle stories, carnivals, drug-use and madness and a colonial culture of mutiny memories, Evangelicalism, magistrates and the asylum. It explores the ways in which the colonial army helped promote this sepoy religion while at the same time attempting to control and suppress certain aspects of it. The book brings to light the existence of a distinct 'barracks Islam' and shows its importance to the cultural no less than the military history of colonial India.

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In memoriam
Russell Parker Jones
Raconteur
1968–2003

O! Matter and impertinency mix’d;
Reason in madness! *King Lear*

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'As July advanced, the bazaar at Malakand became full of tales of the Mad Fakir. A great day for Islam was at hand. A mighty man had arisen to lead them.'[1] So wrote the young Winston Churchill in his account of the rise of Mullā Mastān, 'the Mad Fakir of Swat', on India's North-West Frontier in the 1890s. Churchill was by no means the first Englishman to spread rumours of rabble-rousing 'fakirs', and, from the southern to the northern tip of the subcontinent, the imperial memoirs of many a British officer are replete with similar stories. Such tales were a common currency of the old India hand and a familiar pattern in the discursive fabric of empire. In the wake of the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 especially, one strand of this fabric lent colour to reports about *faqīrs* rousing trouble among Indian soldiers under British command. By the 1920s, the tales of *faqīr* intrigue reached a crescendo of incredibility. It is to Raleigh Trevelyan that we owe the recording of perhaps the most extraordinary account of a *faqīr*-instigated rebellion. Trevelyan records how at the time of the Bacha-ye-Saqaw uprising in Afghanistan in the late 1920s,

> A ridiculous rumour had circulated in India that T. E. Lawrence – when as Aircraftman Shaw he was trying, or pretending, to lead an anonymous life in the desert outpost of Miramshah in Waziristan – was behind the rebellion. It had actually been claimed that Lawrence had dared to disguise himself as a holy man. I remember Walter [Trevelyan (1893–1953), Special Service Officer of the Kashmir State Infantry stationed in Gilgit 1929–33] saying he had been in Lahore at the time and a real holy man there had been lynched because word had got around that he was Lawrence.[2]

The fog of war and rumour that had long surrounded the *faqīrs* was now fuelling even the wildest assertions. Yet for all the abundance of such reports in the archive of empire, historians still have precious

[1] W. S. Churchill, *The Story of the Malakand Field Force* (repr. Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2004 [1898]), p. 27.

[2] R. Trevelyan, *The Golden Oriole: Childhood, Family and Friends in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 111.

little sense of the character of these *faqīrs* as they appeared to their followers and of the nature of their relationship to the Indian soldiers on whom British rule in large part depended. At its simplest, this book aims to sift through the reports and rumours to answer precisely these questions: Who were the *faqīrs?* And what was their relationship with the colonial soldier?

Today, as 150 years ago, the topic of Islam and warfare remains a tendentious one. Ever since the emergence of a colonial historiography of India, the association between Islam and military conquest has been a fraught theme in the study of India's past. Given the subject matter of this book, it is therefore necessary to make a few clarificatory remarks about the all too easy connection to be made between Muslims and violence. Many discussions of this topic assume some sort of innate Islamic predilection towards holy war. Whatever its dubious attractions, the assumption of such innate civilisational drives makes a travesty of the basic principles of historical enquiry on which this book is built. In a study investigating the connections between Islam and the armies of imperial India it would be particularly inappropriate to assume the trans-historical validity of attitudes towards Islam which were themselves only being formed in the colonial era. This is not to deny the long-standing association of India's Muslims with the soldiering profession, an association that ironically (and perhaps paradoxically) rendered the Muslim soldier one of the main building blocks of empire. But if James Mill's foundational early nineteenth-century narrative of a medieval 'Muslim invasion' had its forebears in the historiography of the Indo-Islamic sultanates themselves, recent research has shown that this picture of an expressly 'Islamic' conquest was more akin to the rhetoric of a book-writing clerical class than to a more general picture of agency and motive. Islam had no innate relationship – hostile or supportive – to any empire, and, as the following chapters show, its relationship to the life of the colonial soldier was a malleable and inconstant one.

By drawing attention to the forms of Islam associated with Muslims serving in one of the armies by which Britain maintained its control over India, this book aims to take discussions about Islam and warfare in new directions, not least by turning around the familiar terms of debate in which Muslim violence is seen as perpetually directed against colonial objectives. As *Islam and the Army in Colonial India* hopes to demonstrate, the Muslims and their religion were at times less the enemies of empire than its assistants. By looking at the religious practices associated with the Muslim sepoys of the Hyderabad Contingent, this book places Islam into colonial history proper, showing how a historically mutable Islam helped shape the fortunes of empire while at the same time being itself reshaped by the military structures

of sepoy life. The relationship between the religious traditions of the Muslim soldier and the exigencies of the British Empire was therefore one of give and take: the Islam of the Indian soldier was capable of assisting or resisting imperial agendas, lending mechanisms of loyalty no less than rebellion. The book is not primarily intended as a study of the Indian Army but is instead an attempt to link up a series of historiographical threads from different spools in Islamic and religious studies as well as colonial and military history. The intention is to offer new perspectives on writing 'history from below' by looking at the opportunities and predicaments presented by the interaction of empire with the religious culture of the Indian soldier that range from festivity and evangelicalism to madness and drug-use. In uncovering the world of the *faqīrs* long vilified in the rhetoric of empire, the book is in the end a study of what was in more ways than one a "subaltern" Islam.

Given the potential danger of the misuses of scholarship for political ends, it is perhaps worth issuing a word of caution. What is seen in this book is only a slice of India's Islamic history and an interpretation of that slice at that. Explored in *Islam and the Army in Colonial India* is the encounter of Islam with the military culture of the British Empire, an investigation which could probably be repeated to similar effect with regard to the Hindus and Sikhs who also served in the armies of British India and whose religious customs and sacred spaces were also shaped by military service. Although this book draws attention to the Muslim sepoy followers of such *faqīr* holy men as Afzal Shāh, Banē Miyān and Tāj al-dīn, it is important to state that in their lifetimes they also counted ordinary Hindus among their followers. After their deaths, their shrines became places of Hindu no less than Muslim veneration, and their current successors have done much in the service of communal harmony.

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The book had its origins in the noisy courtyard around the tomb of a former colonial soldier. Like other Muslim shrines in India, the grave of the old soldier serves as a stronghold of memory, a treasury of tales brought there by people seeking blessings, gossip, amusement, exorcism or simple respite from the traffic. If I initially fell into the latter category, my curiosity was soon captured by the faded photographs of sepoys that decorated the shrine's saloon and the stories I was told about the man who was buried there. At first there were just spoken tales to collect, not least from Muinuddin Khan Sahib, the great-nephew and last living link with the dead soldier-saint, who was by then in his late nineties and who as a boy used to lead the old man round by the arm. On a later visit to India, I was introduced to another distant relative, Mustafa Shah Biyabani, who with the uncanny timing of the *faqīrs* handed me a copy of

the sepoy's biography. It was the first I had heard of the text's existence, and it was to entirely transform the direction of my research. Since searches in numerous libraries in India and Britain have failed to locate another copy of this small-town Urdu lithograph, there is much to be grateful for to those who preserved what has proven to be a valuable and perhaps unique source. Without Mustafa Shah's sense of the fragility of history, and his generosity in sharing his books with me, my own book would not have been possible.

First place in the roster of thanks must therefore go to Mustafa Shah Biyabani and to those others who introduced me to the *faqīr* Banē Miyān and through him to the religious world of the sepoys. I have already mentioned Muinuddin Khan and the hospitality he, Kashifuddin Khan and their family showed me at Banē Miyān's shrine in Aurangabad sowed the seeds of this book in my imagination. I would especially like to thank Sarkar for his own tales of the soldier's life and for the generosity of a true officer and gentleman. During several frantic days, Riazuddin Nehri was tireless in introducing me to the right people in Aurangabad, and the *majālis* of my friend Bashar Nawaz made my evenings no less memorable. In Qazipeth, I was helped in my enquiries about Afzal Shāh by Syed Shujathullah Hussaini Biabani, Iqbal Biabani and Aziz Baig, who provided me with several other rare texts and guided me around the padre's shrine. Numerous other hosts showed me around the many other tombs, cantonments and churches that I visited during several research visits to India, and I am thankful for their kindness too. I was given a judicious measure of assistance by the librarians of the Salar Jung Library and Osmania University Library in Hyderabad, for which I am commensurately grateful.

Outside India, I was helped by a number of individuals and institutions. Doug Peers was particularly generous in sharing his vast knowledge of the literature on the Indian Army and its predecessors. At an earlier stage in the project, I was encouraged to problematise my Urdu sources through participating in a small Oxford workshop on 'Indian Texts in their Historical Contexts' with David Washbrook, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Frank Clooney. The day-to-day interaction with colleagues at Manchester University (particularly John Zavos, Jacqueline Suthren Hirst and George Brooke) provided me with the supportive but intellectually challenging environment needed to push my ideas in new directions. In later stages in the project, my readings were supplemented by the timely tip-offs of Anindita Ghosh, Elizabeth de Michelis, Michael Snape and Feroze Yasamee. A new home and colleagues at UCLA proved the perfect setting for making the final revisions to the text. My thanks in particular to Sanjay Subrahmanyam.

I am also grateful to James R. Newell for providing me with a copy of *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā* and giving permission to use his photographs of Tāj al-dīn and the Nagpur asylum. The comments of audiences at the Royal Asiatic Society, UCLA and the universities of Manchester and Cambridge have also worked their way into the following chapters. On a regular scale, Christopher Shackle and Francis Robinson were generous as ever with their advice. Timely assistance in preparing the manuscript was lent by Melissa Markauskas, and I am especially grateful to Joseph Bottrill for patient typesetting and for the recommendations of the three anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press, as well as for the encouragement of Marigold Acland. The remaining faults and extravagances are all mine.

I would also like to thank the staff of: the Oriental and India Office Collections at the British Library (particularly Leena Mitford); the Oriental Reading Room at the Bodleian Library; the National Army Museum (particularly Alastair Massie); Balliol College Library (particularly Alan Tadielo); and the library of the Wellcome Institute. Research in India was assisted by travel grants from the British Academy; the Society for South Asian Studies; the Fellows' Travel Fund at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford; and the University of Manchester. I am grateful to Harrassowitz Verlag for permission to reprint sections from 'The *Faqīr* and the Subalterns: Mapping the Holy Man in Colonial South Asia', *Journal of Asian History*, 41, 1 (2007); to Duke University Press for permission to reprint sections from 'Making a 'Muslim' Saint: Writing Customary Religion in an Indian Princely State', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 25, 3 (2005); and to Cambridge University Press for permission to reprint sections from 'Stories of Saints and Sultans: Re-membering History at the Sufi Shrines of Aurangabad', *Modern Asian Studies* 38, 2 (2004) and 'Jack Sepoy and the Dervishes: Islam and the Indian Soldier in Princely Hyderabad', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18, 1 (2008).

Final thanks to Nushin, for sharing house for so long with the shades of bumptious *sāhibs* and their subalterns.

A note on terminology

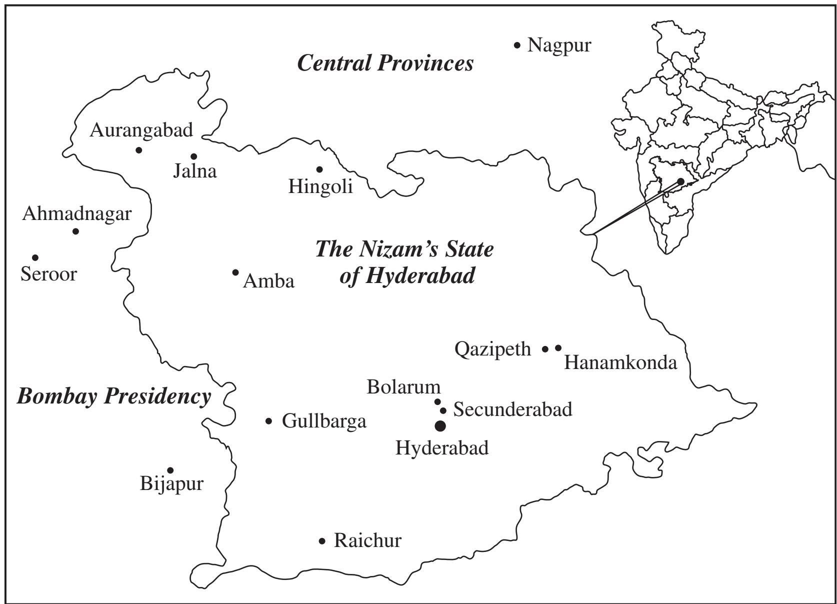
The names of the Muslim soldiers and holy men who appear in this book have been standardised in a simplified version (preserving macrons but removing underdots) of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* system for the transliteration of the Arabic and Persian alphabet. To avoid confusion, for Urdu words the same simplified system has been used with slight modifications to reflect Urdu pronunciation. While Indian personal names have been transliterated according to this system, Indian place names have been rendered in their most familiar form.

Given the inconsistency with which 'Hindustani' Urdu words passed into English, it is also necessary to clarify the book's usage of two key terms. In general, the Anglo-Indian designation 'sepoy' is used in reference to any Indian soldier in colonial employment and not in its more restrictive sense of a foot soldier (which was in any case a misnomer, given the word's derivation from the Persian *sipāhī*, 'horseman, cavalryman'). To avoid an overload of terminology, I have only used the Anglo-Indian term for a cavalryman ('sowar', from the Persian *sawār*, 'rider') when referring to specific Indian cavalrymen.

Glossary of Urdu and Anglo-Indian terms

barakat	blessing power, life-force, *élan vital*
bhāng	cannabis leaves prepared for drinking
charas	cannabis resin prepared for smoking in a *chilam* pipe
faqīr	'poor man'; a mendicant or holy man; a fakir
gānjā	leaf cannabis
jazb	'attraction'; ecstasy; licit madness (see also *majzūb*)
kontinjant	'Contingent'; collective term for the British-commanded regiments of Hyderabad State
mahfil	a social or religious gathering, typically for a musical performance
majzūb	a person ecstatically 'attracted' to God; a holy fool
mawlwī	'my master'; an authority on Islamic tradition; a mullah (Anglicised as maulvi)
munshī	a writer, or secretary, usually working in Persian or Urdu; an amanuensis
nawbat	a kettle drum or reveille
nazar	a vow or offering (in cash or kind) made to a prince or a holy man
pādrī	a Christian priest or military chaplain; a 'padre'
pāgalkhāna	'mad house'; colloquial term for an asylum
pīr	'old man'; a spiritual elder or patriarch; a holy man
qalandar	an antinomian wandering Muslim holy man, traditionally wearing a shaven head
qāzī	a Muslim judge or magistrate
risāla	a regiment
sādhū	'perfect, virtuous honourable'; a Hindu holy man
sāhib	'master'; a term of respect, often demanded by Britons in India (Anglicised as sahib)
sepoy	Anglo-Indian term for an Indian soldier (from Persian *sipāhī*, 'soldier, cavalryman')

sowar	Anglo-Indian term for an Indian cavalryman (from Persian *sawār*, 'rider')
subaltern	a low-ranking native officer; a 'subordinate'
walī (pl. *awliyā*)	a 'friend' or 'client' of God; a Muslim saint
zanāna	'women's space'; the female or domestic quarters of a traditional Indian house or shrine



Map Nizam's State and its cantonment towns

Introduction

For a crowd is one man, and the Dancing Fakir had hit upon an old secret of leading rabbles. Captain John Eyton, *The Dancing Fakir* (1922)

Of *faqīrs*, sepoys and madmen

A visitor to the British cantonment of Aurangabad in the early years of the twentieth century may have been surprised at the sight of the naked Indian seen roaming most days round the orderly streets of the compound, occasionally calling out to passing soldiers or pausing to reload his pipe with cannabis. Had our visitor stopped to ask who this audacious fellow was, he may have received any one of a number of answers. Some person may have replied that he was a former soldier, invalided from the Army on account of insanity but whose presence in the cantonment was tolerated on account of his years of service. Another may have replied that the naked man was a holy fool, a gymnosophist celebrated across the land for his miracles; his errant behaviour was proof in itself of his communion with God. Some further respondent may have told our visitor that the dirty fellow was a mere beggar, an idle native who preferred the pleasures of the pipe to a proper day's work. Others still may have given the reflex response to visitors' curiosity about the many such figures seen in the streets of colonial India: he was a 'fakir'.

With his links to a customary Islam of miracle-working holy men and to the patronal networks of Sufi affiliation which surrounded them, it is this figure of the *faqīr* who stands at the centre stage of our investigation into the religious world of the Indian Muslim soldier or 'sepoy' of the high colonial era. For during this period, the meaning of the label 'fakir' was caught between British conceptions of a traditional, passive and superstitious East and pre-colonial Indian notions of the strange powers of poverty and madness. With its literal meaning of 'poor man' derived from the Arabic *faqīr*, the different valence that the term *faqīr* acquired in its transition to English from its older usage in Arabic, Persian and the

regional languages of India was symptomatic of wider transformations in the meaning of madness and poverty, of 'true religion' and rationality, that characterised many an encounter between Indians and Europeans in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The description of the 'fakirs' penned by the Methodist missionary Revd William Butler (1818–99) is a good example of both the denigration of this old-style religion and of its links to the Indian soldier:

> These horrible looking men, with their dishevelled hair, naked bodies, and painted breasts and foreheads, are constantly roving over the country, visiting shrines, making pilgrimages, and performing religious services to their disciples. The Sepoys greatly honoured and liberally patronized these spiritual guides [...] But no one who has seen and known them can doubt that the great majority of the Fakirs are imposters and hypocrites.[1]

Summed up in Butler's disdainful prose are three of the key themes of this book: the nature of the 'service industry' that the *faqīrs* controlled; the character of their relationship with the Indian soldier; and the results of colonial Christian denigration of their form of Islam. Rather than focus on the abstract notion of 'Sufism' that European scholars developed to describe an Islamic counterpart to 'true religion' comprising high moral teachings, exquisite poetry, refined metaphysics and, in a word, 'mysticism', this book instead focuses on the neglected physicality that, in the vile bodies of the *faqīrs*, was obscured by this refined and intellectualising agenda.[2] The *faqīr* was Islam in the flesh, with all of the problems and prospects which that implied.

As historians of colonial India have widely recognised, the Army was one of the most influential institutions to broker exchange between Indians and Britons. While merchants, bureaucrats and Orientalists make up a familiar side of the story of the colonial encounter, a strong case has been made for the centrality of the Army in negotiating the formative relationship between Indians and Britons.[3] After the 'Mutiny' of 1857, the Indian Army played an increasingly prominent role in the practical no less than imaginary lives of the British in India, from its role as the provider of employment and housing for thousands of British soldiers and their families to its provision of a culture of martial storytelling that lent a narrative template for encounters with living Indians.[4] As Douglas Peers has noted, as the largest single employer in India, the Army 'stands out as the institution in which the closest and most sustained contacts were made between the colonial state and its subject peoples'.[5] But to render the Army as a simple tool of empire is to miss the complexity of the colonial encounter: the Indian Army was no less a source of employment, pride and identity for the millions of Indians and their dependents

whose lives were shaped by its offer of prestige and a regular salary. The effects of the colonial military on Indian society were at once minute and vast in their reach. Over the past two decades, the emergence of a 'new' military history of India has sought to examine the different armies of India's past against a range of culturalist concerns, from the transformation of the Indian peasantry to the reading habits of the Victorian schoolboy.[6] This book seeks to understand the interface between the Army and religion as it found expression among the Indian soldiers of the Hyderabad Contingent between around 1850 and 1930. As such, the book provides a particular case study of the wider cultural negotiations demanded by the presence of vast numbers of Muslim soldiers in the multifarious regiments of the subcontinent.

It is a contention of this book that the sheer scale of Muslim employment allowed the Army, through its institutions as well as attitudes, to disseminate certain forms of religiosity among its soldiers at the same time that it restrained others. Beneath this proposition, *Islam and the Army in Colonial India* provides a detailed reconstruction of the interaction of sepoy religion with the colonial Army as found in the military fellowships of four *faqīrs*. Like any exercise in micro-history, the extent to which the findings can be generalised is a separate matter, and it will be clear to readers that the evidence provided shows primarily what it shows: a particular story of a particular time and place. But if they are to be of any use to other historians, such small-scale investigations need to suggest forms of connection to conversations about processes on the larger scale. While recognising the dangers of over-stepping the evidence, the book therefore offers parallels in passing where they are apparent to circumstances in other parts of India before, in the conclusion, extrapolating a set of processes that are offered for wider application. The extent to which these processes may be regarded as more general is up to other researchers to decide. By drawing on a series of cheap print Urdu biographies of the holy men associated with sepoys in the princely state of Hyderabad (also known as the Nizam's State), what the following chapters do provide is the first detailed reconstruction of the religious life of the Muslim soldiers, and, as such, a study of Indian military life that is unique for being built on a foundation of 'native' sources. The perspective that these sources provide allows us to assess the degree to which, in Hyderabad at least, the British Empire promoted or alternatively reformed the religious life of 'Jack Sepoy' and so to paint a picture of an Islam that was subject to the forces of history as expressed in the meeting of the Indian soldier and the British officer.[7] Shaped by the quotidian concerns of the soldier's life between barrack hall and battlefield, this was

an Islam that at once served and was served by the interests of empire: it was what we may term a 'barracks Islam'.

According to a popular Persian idiom, the anonymous masses of history are referred to as *siyāhī-e-lashkar*, the 'blackness of the Army'. Nameless and forgotten, but for a few exceptions, we have till now little sense of the individual character and concerns of the Indian soldiers by whose efforts Britain's empire in India was created and sustained. The memoirs of British former officers in India survive in their hundreds, just as there also exists a smaller (and late) English-language memorial literature penned by Indian members of the native officer class. But in comparison to the wealth of studies of the British officer and (to a lesser extent) foot soldier, the intellectual, emotional and spiritual world of the sepoy is lost in the anonymity of the lower ranks.[8] A similar preponderance of studies of 'big men' characterises the history of Islam in colonial India more generally, in which the lion's share of attention has been given to the rebels and reformists whose movements seemingly caught the current of history with their sense for the needs of a changing society.[9] *Islam and the Army in Colonial India* deliberately avoids this main beam of historical attention to look at a series of figures whose histories have till now been lost in the proverbial 'blackness of the Army' but are recoverable through their appearance in a number of early twentieth-century Urdu texts that detail the careers of the Muslim holy men attached to the sepoys of the Hyderabad Contingent, the British-officered army stationed in the cantonments of the Nizam's State. For though our visitor to the Aurangabad cantonment was a rhetorical invention, the naked Indian he saw alternatively loafing or parading there was no figure of fiction. But as the range of answers offered to our visitor suggests, precisely who this figure was – sepoy, *faqīr*, idler – was unclear, and no less contested. Had our visitor returned to Aurangabad a few decades later – say around 1925 – he may have been even more surprised to find that a pilgrimage centre had developed around the grave of the beggar whose shouts had caught his attention years earlier. Or perhaps, with the intervening years imbibing the 'wisdom' of empire, he had learned that in India there was nothing out of the ordinary in common people worshipping the bones of 'charlatans' or 'fools'. Between these possible attitudes of wonder and disregard lies an uncharted history of the personal and institutional transformations that made possible such traffic between holiness and poverty, soldiering and madness, a history that also reveals the impact of colonial attitudes towards the Indian subalterns on the framing of later attitudes towards 'popular religion'. As much as this is a book on the Army, it is also a study of the fortunes of 'popular' religion

as evinced in the conflicts surrounding the customary Islam of the Hyderabad sepoys.

Unlike our fictional visitor, the drugged and naked wanderer in the Aurangabad cantonment had a name: Muhammad Aʿzam Khān. Over the following chapters, we show that Muhammad Aʿzam Khān and his fellow *faqīrs* and sepoys have a history that can still be traced amid the 'blackness of the Army'. Making sense of this history is far from straightforward, since our sources on the lives of the sepoys and their *faqīr* guardians are written from a standpoint that differs radically from the soberly empirical tone of the official and memorial literature that constitutes the primary sources on the British side. As represented through the Urdu materials, the world of the sepoy was one that reckoned with different forms of agency, miraculous and supernatural, to those recognised in the writings of their British commanders. Indeed, such modes of agency formed the key currency of the holy men with whom Indian soldiers had aligned themselves from long before Britain's entry to India's military labour market and with whom they continued to associate themselves into the twentieth century.

In relying on cheap print Urdu tales of the sepoys and *faqīrs*, our history is an insider's history and, as such, paints a picture of the British Empire – more specifically the far military reach of empire in India's grandest princely state – from the standpoint of its lowest-ranking servants. As in other essays in 'subaltern' historiography, there is certainly room in the story for resistance to colonial power, not least in our account of Muhammad Aʿzam Khān himself. But in protecting the sepoys serving on imperial duty, the Muslim holy men who surrounded these soldiers were also aides to the expansion of empire. As William Pinch has shown in his recent study of *yōgī* and *sādhū* warriors in India, at different times such armed ascetic regiments alternatively employed their violence in service or repudiation of the Raj.[10] Such studies demonstrate that it is historically futile to regard either Hinduism or Islam as a fixed entity, static in opposition to the interests of the colonial powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Like any other large-scale religious or ideological label, for the historian 'Islam' is only meaningful when conceived in terms of persons, institutions or discourses at work in the social world.[11] It is in this way that sense can be made of the different ways in which religion operates in history: when 'religion' is seen in terms of contingent human beings rather than in terms of fixed theological ideals – when made present in living Muslims rather than when made abstract in a reified universal Islam. If religion is subject to the forces of history, then what actually constitutes history – what may be admitted into historical narrative in terms of valid agents and causes – is in turn the product of the assumptions that underlie different cultural (alternatively, philosophical,

scientific or religious) worldviews. To write subaltern history in both the literal sense of a history of the Indian soldier and the theoretical sense of a 'history from below' thus requires a willingness to contemplate alternative constructions of history to those brought to India by the empirically-minded heirs to Hobbes and Hume. For the source materials that this book uses to recreate the sepoys' world were written in an episteme that was accepting of alternative forms of agency to those of the physicalist Newtonian universe. If the Subaltern Studies series attempted to eschew the 'grand narratives' of national liberation and class struggle that rob the past of its own terms of reference, in largely ignoring religion for all their fine work, many of the contributors to the series sidestepped the more crucial problem of writing history through the terms with which the participants of that history understood their world to operate.[12] If not necessarily 'religious' in the sense of the unified ideological appeals of the modernising or reformed religions of the nineteenth century, this world was nonetheless one of multiple, often invisible, capricious and unpredictable powers. These powers comprise forms of agency which since Hume's critique 'serious' history has been unable to take at face value, most particularly the anti-scientific agency of the miracle (Urdu *karāmat, kirishma*, *muʿjiza*).

More recent scholarship has attempted to seize such bulls by the horns, asking such difficult questions as whether India can be said to have possessed a history before the colonial reconstruction of India's past based on 'rational' models of historical agency; or, alternatively, whether it is possible to read Indian source materials 'along the grain' so as to better recreate the texture of past experience, even if at times necessarily letting go of the desire for objective knowledge of 'what actually happened'.[13] In this way, writing any form of 'history from below' has the seditious potential to undermine dominant constructions of history *en somme*. The underlying struggle that defines this book is therefore less one between Islam and the British Empire than one between the different ways of recounting the world on which the participants in that history relied. From examining the points at which these ways convened, interacted or disputed one another in recounting how the world operates, what emerges is less a clash of civilisations than a clash of interpretations.

Islam and the army in colonial India

Until the mechanisation of warfare robbed combat of all but the traces of valour, in his various guises the warrior served as a heroic model in numerous societies around the globe. This was not only true of so-called 'militaristic' societies – those of Spartans, Umayyad Arabs or imperial Britons – but also of societies as different as those of medieval agrarian

India and the pastoral Massai Mara.[14] In all its religious and social groupings, India has been no exception to this rule of thumb. Despite popular images of an essentially peaceful and non-violent Hindu civilisation that were reinforced by the pragmatic politics of Mohandas Gandhi, scholarship has recently demonstrated that far from relinquishing violence, in their provision of professional bands of mercenary soldiers, the Hindu *sādhū* or 'renouncer' orders of pre-colonial India were among the most reliable suppliers of aggression to the Indian war market.[15] While the roving *sādhū* armies that the British encountered, and tamed, in their conquest of Bengal were successfully suppressed, by the middle of the nineteenth century the militant traditions of the Sikh *akālīs* were found to be more adaptable to British designs. Like other socio-religious groups in pre-colonial India, the Sikhs had developed a form of martial organisation that since Guru Har Gobind's assumption of the authority of spirit and world – of *pīrī* and *mīrī* – was inseparable from the precepts of their 'religion'.[16] In the decades after the British conquest of the remnants of the Sikh empire in the Punjab of the 1840s, the development of an ideology of 'martial races' lent the newly organised Indian Army a means of classifying the different peoples of India according to their innate capacity for war, a 'scientific' logic that drew on indigenous notions of warrior peoples current among Indians themselves.[17] With the forces of society and politics eventually read as those of biological race, like other Punjabis the Sikhs found themselves classified among the chief martial races of the subcontinent. The legacy of these racial classifications is still with us today in common stereotypes of the peaceful Indian and the violent Arab, themselves transmuted into 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' through the ideological displacement of race by religion.

Given the prevalence and prestige of military service in India, it should come as no surprise that stories of heroic warfare long formed a staple subject for the literatures of India. Such medieval Sanskrit works as the *Rājadharmakānda* of Lakshmīdhara and the *Narapati-jayacaryā-svarodaya* of Naraharī instructed Ksatriya Hindu rulers in the arts of divination, oneiromancy and amulet-making to ensure success in battle.[18] From the Sanskrit epics of the *Rāmayana* and *Mahābhārata* to the oral epics in regional languages collected by colonial ethnographers, tales of martial heroes served to entertain no less than edify.[19] The same has also long been true in the visual arts, to the extent that weaponry and armour were adorned with no less care than paintings proper of soldiers in equestrian or rampant pose.[20] The stories of Indian foot soldiers and cavalrymen, of sepoys and sowars, recorded in the saintly biographies that form the main sources of this book belong in part to this same tradition of licit entertainment. At a time when in

England such soldierly memoirs as Earl Roberts of Kandahar's *Forty-One Years in India* went through dozens of editions, heroic tales of Indian soldiers were similarly important in popular Indian publishing. From the effects of the theory of 'martial races' on the social structure of Punjab to the contribution of the 1857 rebellion to the music halls of Britain, the military cultures of India and Britain were mutually constitutive. This was, after all, part of the spectacle no less than process of empire.[21]

With his fine uniform and with money in his pocket, the soldier was a familiar and very local hero in the villages of India no less than Lancashire or the English Midlands. As such, the histories of the wayward cavalrymen, mad sepoys and miracle-working *faqīrs* who form the unlikely heroes of this book cover a neglected part of both Indian and British imperial history, at once abetting and subverting the expansion of the Raj. We must be wary of projecting an anachronous and overtly nationalist consciousness onto the thousands of Indian soldiers who served under British command in the colonial era. Military historians have debated the extent to which the sepoy revolts of the nineteenth century – including the rebellion of 1857 – were prompted by transgressions of the sepoy's rights and privileges rather than his allegiance to some greater national or ethnic collectivity. What is clear is that the sepoy world that this book explores should be regarded as neither a parochial nor a traditional culture but rather as a culture – and in particular a religious culture – in transition. Despite its pre-colonial antecedents, the sepoy world that we investigate was the product of a regimentally confined social environment comprising both Indians and Britons. With its own norms of camaraderie and command, a regiment forms a social unit of its own, the structures of which are capable of either underpinning or undermining alternative affiliations, whether of caste, class or religion. What the following chapters explore is therefore a distinctly sepoy religious production, a barracks Islam that for all its connections with wider historical forces was concomitant with, and to put the matter at its most crass, functionally subservient to the institutional structures and professional demands of sepoy life.[22] This is not to say that either the sepoys or their holy men always obeyed the chain of colonial command, as the rebellion examined in Chapter 2 makes clear. It is rather to contend that the services offered to the sepoys by their holy men were shaped by the demands of their soldier patrons.

Indian military history has long been haunted by the spectre of rebel-rousing Muslim preachers urging the troops toward mutiny. The perspective given in *Islam and the Army in Colonial India* complicates this picture by showing that Islam was not so much an external factor that leaked into the parade ground but was a religious culture – a barracks Islam – that

developed out of the soldiers' own lifestyle. As we see in Chapter 2, the reliance of certain holy men on a salaried sepoy clientele meant that the Indian soldier was no mere pawn in the religious games of his preceptors but was active in shaping the actual rules of the game.

Army and empire in Hyderabad state

The setting for this case study of barracks Islam is the princely state of Hyderabad between around 1850 and 1930. Like other successor states that emerged during the eighteenth century, the Nizam's State of Hyderabad owed its existence to the struggles to divide up the territories of the Mughal Empire in the decades after the death of Awrangzeb in 1118/1707. It was during the reign of the third Nizam of Hyderabad, Nizām ʿAlī Khān (r. 1175/1761–1218/1803), that British power began to expand across the Deccan from the East India Company's southern outpost in the Madras Presidency. As part of the rivalry between the various European and Indian powers, in 1798, Nizām ʿAlī Khān signed the Treaty of Subsidiary Alliance with the East India Company, by which Hyderabad was gradually brought into the ambit of British influence and laid the foundations of the 'Hyderabad Contingent' as the British-controlled regiments in Hyderabad became collectively known.[23] If an over-concentration on the political or 'colonial' archive has at times exaggerated the scale of British influence on Hyderabadi life, there was one institution through which British influence was spread throughout the Nizam's State, which contained only a relatively small and geographically confined European population. That institution was the army and, by extension, its logistical corollaries of cantonment towns, roads and railways. By this the people of Hyderabad felt the presence of empire through encounters with the British officers, priests or memsahibs who dwelt in the cantonments that followed the Contingent's deployment all around the Nizam's State.

Although commanded by a British officer class, the Hyderabad Contingent was manned by Indian soldiers and funded at the Nizam's expense.[24] The Contingent was nominally part of the Madras Army, and regiments of the latter were often stationed near the Contingent's men in Hyderabad, heightening their exposure to colonial modes of service. Like colonial armies in other parts of the world, as a social organisation the Contingent was an intrinsically hybrid formation whose barracks and messes formed the laboratories of new cultural and religious forms.[25] Partly in response to political change, and partly in response to the reorganisation of India's military traditions under the British, the character of the original 'subsidiary force' raised after 1798 changed

throughout the nineteenth century. Around 1816, several of the irregular brigades of infantry and cavalry that had earlier been raised to meet specific threats were reorganised as part of a wider pattern of reigning in the 'dangerously' unregulated system of mixed European and Indian bands (most famously Skinner's Horse) which presented a threat to an increasingly racialised no less than centralised model of military order.[26] After this first round of reform, several new brigades of both horse and foot were founded. By 1826, the five Hyderabad cavalry regiments become known as the Nizam's Cavalry, which was also supported by a number of infantry regiments. After 1829, these forces took orders only from the British Resident in Hyderabad, and, with their British officers and the growing influence of the Resident, although nominally in the service of the Nizam, the soldiers in fact served the interests of the Company and then the Raj. The Contingent's cavalry regiments were principally made up of Muslims of old gentlemanly families. As one of the British officers serving in Hyderabad in the middle years of the nineteenth century explained, 'these troops are principally Mahomedans […] The force consists of picked men: many of the privates are even of the best Mahomedan families.'[27]

Such was the cost to the Nizam's treasury of maintaining this army that by the middle of the nineteenth century the state was effectively bankrupt. In 1853, the government of the fourth Nizam, Nāsir al-Dawla (r. 1244/1829–1273/1857), was forced to surrender to the British the agriculturally rich northern province of Berar, along with the districts of Osmanabad and Raichur, in lieu of arrears. As a result of the Berar fiasco, the Hyderabadi armies were once again reorganised in such a way as to maximise British influence, and it was during this period of reorganisation that the cavalry and infantry regiments became collectively known as the Hyderabad Contingent. From this period, the Contingent came to exert ever-greater social and political influence in the Nizam's State as its manpower and administrative appendages expanded to create a network of cantonments replete with churches, schools, hospitals and asylums. It is this period of the colonial army's greatest influence in Hyderabad that is dealt with in this book. Although in 1902 the Contingent was technically disbanded as a separate force and its regiments absorbed into the Indian Army, the cantonments in which the Contingent had been posted continued to be occupied by the soldiers of the Indian Army, and most people in the Nizam's State continued to refer to them by the word 'Contingent' (*kontinjant*), which had long been absorbed into the Urdu of the Deccan. It is in this more general sense of regiments in Hyderabad under British command that the term 'Contingent' is used for the remainder of this book.

As we have hinted, the most obvious way in which the British presence reshaped the social environment of the Nizam's State was through the foundation of cantonment districts.[28] The most important of these was Secunderabad, named *Sikandarābād* in honour of the third Nizam, Akbar ʿAlī Khān Sikandar Jāh (r. 1218/1803–1244/1829). As the location of the neo-classical British Residency and of a growing colonial urban infrastructure of engineers' bungalows, missions, markets and hospitals, Secunderabad was the seat of British influence in the Nizam's State. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Secunderabad lay about five miles north of the expanding city of Hyderabad; positioned beside it was the chief headquarters of the Contingent at Bolarum.[29] In addition to the Bolarum barracks, the Contingent maintained a network of military stations all over the Nizam's State, between which its different regiments were moved regularly. In addition to Bolarum, there were five such cantonment stations of the Contingent, located on the edges of the towns of Aurangabad, Hingoli, Jalna, Amba and Raichur.[30] As time passed, the larger of these cantonments – especially those of Secunderabad and Aurangabad – constituted independent towns in their own right, governed by their own British-run administration and answerable to the laws of British India rather than of Hyderabad. Here, in the midst of an independent state still governed by an *ancien régime* of Muslim and, to a lesser degree, Hindu aristocrats who considered themselves the legitimate heirs of the Mughals, the cantonments formed tidy small-scale models of the imperial order.[31] Not merely military outposts, the Contingent's cantonments were little colonies advertising and exporting the empire.

Still, for all their attempts to present this image of an orderly and authoritative imperial culture, the architectural reality of the cantonments was often less impressive. In their insularity and architectonic paranoia, they formed built expressions of the dilemmas of the empire as a garrison state.[32] We can get a sense of the appearance of the cantonments in which the soldiers of the Contingent moved from the following description of the recently abandoned cantonment of Seroor just to the west of the Nizam's borders:

> Two long and regular rows of buildings, extending the whole length of the cantonment, mark where the officers resided. All their houses had small gardens attached to them; and in many spots, the hedges, shrubs, water-courses, flower-plots, and gravel-walks, still remain; and in other places, a gateway, standing alone, shews where an enclosure has been [...] Here and there a wide and lofty arch points out the site of a mess-room; and in another quarter, a square building, with high walls, is all that remains of a tennis-court. Low huts, once the residences of servants, horse-keepers, gardeners, and palanquin-bearers, are scattered about in the

vicinity of the houses; and ranges of deserted stables bound the ends of the enclosures […] A little farther off are the hovels of the native soldiers, crowded together, and forming an undefined mass of rubbish.[33]

From such settings, the colonial army acted as an important motor of social and religious change, particularly when the prestige of soldiering was combined with the salaried wealth of the regular soldier and the mobility of army life.[34] Despite the centrality of the Army to the British conquest of the Muslim-ruled states they encountered in India, the role of the military in this process of colonial reform has been widely neglected.[35] In part, this reflects the disregard of military history among social and religious historians; but it is also the legacy of older representations of the Raj as an essentially peaceable and contractual polity rather than one to which the military was of central importance.[36] In fact, the army was key to the formation of imperial attitudes towards India, and particularly towards the Muslims who were paradoxically regarded as perennial opponents of British rule. Nowhere was this more true than in such princely states as Hyderabad, where the Residents, political agents and Indian assistants who formed the main means of interaction between princely India and Calcutta were usually drawn from the Indian Army rather than the civilian Indian Civil Service.

David Omissi has stated that the army formed a 'microcosm of the wider colonial order'.[37] If this was so, then it is important that we recognise the colonial army's role in the process of Islamic reform as the employer of vast numbers of Indian Muslims for over two centuries. By the turn of the twentieth century, the increasing role of literacy in sepoy life and the rural soldier's exposure on duty to the religious forms of India's cities (or even of other Muslim regions overseas) meant that on their return to their home villages many soldiers brought with them more urban, textualist or otherwise reformist versions of Islam.[38] Different aspects of army policy – such as employing literate *ʿulamā* as 'regimental maulvis' or regulating the construction of religious buildings inside army stations – were also factors in religious change among sepoys whose own prestige later magnified these changes in their home settings.[39] Yet the cultural origins of the sepoy lay in a rural and vernacular world rooted in a customary Islam of miracles, intercessors and saintly shrines. As a result of these tensions between the soldier's origins and his experience of army life, over time Islam was itself shaken by the unsteady institutions of sepoy life between the village and the cantonment. The seismic effects of this fracture were manifold. The same forces of literacy, wealth and circulation through which the sepoy could affiliate himself and lend support to the reformist Islam of the urban petty bourgeoisie and new rural

class of imported literate mullas could also be used to sponsor the atavistic cults of belligerently partisan and *gānjā*-smoking *faqīrs*. In such ways, through the sheer scale of its infrastructure and the number of Muslim soldiers, the Indian Army and its offshoots in the princely states were implicated in the religious transformations of colonial India.

These transformations were, however, fraught with contradiction. In order to see why this was so, it is worth pausing to briefly compare the social impact of the colonial army in India with that of its contemporary armies in the Middle East. In such regions as the Ottoman Empire, Iran, Egypt and Libya, both colonial and independent programmes of military modernisation combined with the meritocratic ideology that emerged from the European military reforms of the eighteenth century to make the European-commanded armies of the Middle East an important mechanism of social mobility, modernity, the politics of republicanism and ultimately independence.[40] Despite the obvious similarities of having European officers, educated but considerably junior 'native officers' and lower ranks from the tribes or peasantry, the Indian Army bore a number of key differences from its counterparts in the Middle East. In large part these were based in the different circumstances in which the antecedents of the Indian Army emerged in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a period in which the reliance of a small number of European officers and administrators on their Indian soldiers evolved into a system of accommodation to the cultural mores of the Indian soldier. Although later reforms would seek to instill an imported set of 'modern' principles of service and command, the early freedom given to the soldiers' own military culture meant that the Indian Army was never to become as 'modern' as the colonial and semi-colonial armies of the Middle East, which developed in a later period when European cultural and military superiority allowed for a much smaller range of cultural compromise. The respect and indeed celebration of regimental traditions that characterised the paternalistic ideology of the British officer at home and abroad blended with the blunt fact of the sepoys' determination to defend their own traditions (as officers liked to explain the 1857 'Mutiny') to create the holding plan of compromise through which the Indian Army officially celebrated the cultural traditions of its regiments. Whether he liked it or not, the Indian soldier was trained to dress in the uniform of tradition, and the ramifications of this were several. First, unlike in the Middle East, in India the leaders of the movements for republican modernity and independence came from the Civil Service and professions rather than the Army. A comparison of the backgrounds of the likes of Gandhi, Nehru, Savarkar or Jinnah with the likes of ʿUrabi Pasha, Reza Shah, Atatürk or Nasser is striking indeed. Second, the cultural compromises of the Indian

Army created a shaky and unstable ground for interaction between officers and their Indian soldiers, which led to the quiet contradictions of the suppression of certain 'native' traditions and the public celebration of others. It is the shaky ground of the place given to the Muslim soldier's religious customs that this book explores.

This role of the colonial army as a motor of religious change is demonstrated in Britain's informal empire in Hyderabad. As the following chapters show, the Hyderabad Contingent was intimately connected to the emergence of the cults of Afzal Shāh Biyābānī (d. 1273/1856) and Banē Miyān (d. 1339/1921), the cultic name of the *faqīr* and former sepoy Muhammad Aʿzam Khān with whom this Introduction began. For it was through the combination of a prestigious soldierly clientele, the financial wealth brought by a sepoy following and the ability of the mobile soldier to disseminate the fame of his patron holy man that the cults of Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān became two of the most popular religious movements to emerge in Hyderabad between 1850 and 1930. The Army enabled the spread of their Islam: the network of cantonments constructed around the Nizam's State to house the Hyderabad Contingent formed the means by which the barracks Islam of Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān was spread from one corner of the state to another. By alternatively promoting and controlling different aspects of sepoy religion, the Contingent, and the wider colonial administration attached to it in the cantonments, of Hyderabad formed the structure that would lend shape to the Islam of the sepoys as it passed through the colonial era. It is towards an elucidation of this barracks Islam – and of the role of Britain's colonial armies in both its promotion and reform – that the following chapters march.

However, before we turn towards our central discussion of the religious world of the Hyderabadi sepoy of the colonial era, it is important to gain a sense of the traditions which he inherited from his forefathers. Although the Islam of the sepoys was renegotiated under the discursive and institutional constraints of colonial service, it did not spring whole from Britannia's side but instead drew on traditions that substantially predated the arrival of Englishmen on the Indian military scene. Chapter 1 therefore provides an overview of the intersection of Islam with military life in pre-colonial India, paying particular attention to traditions from the Deccan region under the late Mughals and the early Nizams which the sepoys of the Hyderabad Contingent would have inherited. This too was a soldier's Islam, of holy men lending miraculous aid to their followers on the field of war. It was the stories of such feats that shaped the expectations that later colonial sepoys held of their own *faqīrs*. But, there was an obvious and crucial difference between the contexts

of these traditions and those explored in the following chapters, namely that the Mughal warrior served an empire which if not simplistically 'Islamic' was at least controlled by a Muslim elite, while his descendant of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries served an empire ruled by Christians. In order to introduce the discursive context of the specific imperial Christian critiques of sepoy religion explored in the following chapters, after surveying the 'supernatural warfare' that bound pre-colonial Indian soldiers to their holy men, Chapter 1 then turns towards the place of Christianity in Britain's armies in India and at home. By briefly examining the roles in the army given to Christian religion and its chaplain representatives, the chapter argues that the British formulation of army religion as being concerned with soldiers' morale rather than with extra-physical agency was in sharp contrast to the sepoys' allegiance to miracle-working *faqīrs*. By placing the religious life of British and Indian soldiers in this context of institutionally empowered and culturally Protestant notions of 'true religion' and rational agency, the chapter hopes to widen the scope of military history to address the alternative praxis of 'supernatural warfare' uncovered in the details of the following chapters.

Chapter 2 turns immediately to the world of the Hyderabadi sepoy by reconstructing the form of Islam practised by the sepoy followers of Afzal Shāh Biyābānī (d. 1273/1856). As the Muslim patron of the Indian soldiers at the Hanamkonda cantonment, Afzal Shāh's Urdu biography presents him in such roles as miraculously ensuring the promotion of his sepoy followers, protecting them on route marches across the countryside and aiding and abetting them in the 'Bolarum Mutiny' of 1855. In addition to using 'cheap print' Urdu sources, the chapter draws on colonial documentation to compare British and Indian accounts of this Hyderabadi precursor to the Great Rebellion of 1857. Prompted by the cancellation by an evangelical British officer of his soldiers' leave during the Muharram festival in 1855, the Bolarum revolt is used to discuss the centrality of celebration to sepoy religion, in which the prevalence of revelry, opium and music challenged evangelical and more broadly colonial configurations of 'true religion' and soldierly conduct. Here the discussion turns towards the ways in which colonial attitudes to this Islam of the miraculous were connected not only to the experience of armed conflict overseas (in Sudan, Swat, Afghanistan, Somaliland), where resistance to British rule was connected to querulous 'fakirs', but also to evangelical critiques of the 'superstitious' character of Indian Islam. The tenor of this censure of sepoy religion is examined in detail by referring to the memoirs of evangelical chaplains and soldiers connected to the colonial army in Hyderabad and beyond, showing the proximity of the

sepoys to this discourse of 'true religion' and the influence evangelical ideas had on their own religious practice. In this way, the chapter also traces the motivations behind the decision to present Muslim religious figures after the model of the regimental chaplain and so describe the holy man Afzal Shāh as the *pādrī* (or 'padre') of his sepoy followers.

Chapter 3 centres on Banē Miyān (d. 1339/1921), a former sepoy and protégé of Afzal Shāh whose purported 'insanity' saw him placed in the colonial asylum. Prior to and after his release (or escape) Banē Miyān spent his days in the cantonment of Aurangabad, where he had previously served with the Army and where we met him at the start of this chapter. As well as smoking opium and sharing his cannabis pipe with his sepoy followers, Banē Miyān performed an eccentric set of miracles directed towards the thwarting of British power. After examining these miracle stories in their military contexts, his deeds and misdeeds are further contextualised through a discussion of two of his *faqīr* contemporaries, Bābā Jān of Poona and Tāj al-dīn of Nagpur, the former a female patron of the sepoys and the latter, like Banē Miyān, a mad sepoy himself. The chapter then turns towards the reasons for the rapid decline of such *faqīrs*' influence on Muslim soldiers from around the 1920s. It partly locates the demise of the transgressive heroes of barracks Islam in colonial policy (including legislation on drug-use and the incarceration of mendicants in India's asylums) and partly in the emergence of bourgeois religious reform movements among India's Muslims (promoting a new morality celebrating labour over the begging that had long sustained the *faqīr* economy). By looking at the rise of literacy among the sepoys themselves, the decline of barracks Islam is finally located in the changing character of the sepoy himself. The book concludes with an overview of the forces that shaped the Islam of the Hyderabadi soldier, before summarising the twin forces of promotion and reform that characterised the relationship of the colonial army to the religious world of its Muslim soldiers.

1 Traditions of supernatural warfare

His hand a sabre; a dagger, his tongue;
His finger an arrow; his arm, a spear bright.

Kamāl Pāshazāda, *Elegy on Sultan Selim* (*c.* 1520)

The sepoy's religious inheritance

In the wake of the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, and the widespread perception that its provocateurs were the perpetually tumultuous Muslims, the North Indian schoolmaster Thomas Arnold wrote *The Preaching of Islam* to propose an alternative to the colonial historiography of Islam having spread in India at the tip of the soldier's sword.[1] Projecting the missionary environment of Victorian India onto the medieval past, Arnold's alternative was to suggest that the majority of India's Muslims accepted Islam through the quiet preaching of the Sufis, spreading the simple tenets of Islam through rustic poems in the languages of the Indian peasant. Although modern scholarship has done much to refine and substantially reject both the sword and preaching theses, the connection between Islam and soldiering has remained a controversial topic. Fortuitously, much of the debate has centred on the region of India with which this book is concerned, namely the Deccan region which in large part became the territories of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The colonial debate was reignited with the publication of Richard Eaton's *Sufis of Bijapur* in the late 1970s through Eaton's suggestion that the 'social roles' of certain Sufis comprised not only the vernacular preaching favoured by Arnold and his liberal Indian sympathisers but also the violence associated with a class of 'warrior Sufis' who formed an important part of the sultans' expansion in South India.[2] To Arnold's latter-day supporters in India and Pakistan, the phrase 'warrior Sufi' seemed oxymoronic, and several distinguished historians have sought to undo Eaton's thesis.[3] Carl W. Ernst, for example, has argued that Eaton's sources are late and, as such, tell us more about later reimaginings of the spread of Islam in the Deccan than about the processes themselves.[4] While this critique may

stand with regard to the history of the emergence of the ʿĀdil Shāhī Sultanate of Bijapur (1490–1686), evidence from other periods shows that many Sufis not only had 'day jobs' as soldiers but, in some cases, used their supernatural powers to bring victory to the armies in which they served. Lest this evidence appear to support the model of an Islam spread by the sword, it should be pointed out that the armies in which *faqīr* warriors served were as often involved in wars with other Muslim states as with non-Muslims. Nor were such holy warriors and saintly patrons of the soldiers uniquely Muslim but, instead, were part of a pre-colonial culture of Indian warfare that also included armed bands of Hindu *sādhūs* and Sikh *akālīs*. In this sense, what the scholar classifies as 'religion' served less to define motivations ('spreading Islam', *jihād*) than to offer specific routes to supernatural powers, powers (and the skills necessary to access them) which like the soldier's wider repertoire, could be marketed to the highest bidder. It is this interface between an old-school religion of miraculous holy men and the bloody but marketable metier of the warrior that is explored in this book.

Resort to men of supernatural power was an important part of traditional modes of warfare in India. The connection between the subtle ruses of the *faqīrs* and success on the field of war was widely recognised, and, in both oral and written form, there existed scores, probably hundreds, of accounts of the miraculous agency of a *faqīr* in winning this or that battle.[5] The same was true of the *sādhūs* and *yōgīs* (and sometimes also the Muslim *faqīrs*) depicted as the power behind the thrones of Rajput and other Hindu rulers.[6] But by the late nineteenth century, like other aspects of customary religion, the miraculously 'superstitious' agency and questionable morality of the partisan holy man were coming under attack from both imperial and indigenous corners, a process which is examined in Chapter 2. Despite their neglect by scholars raised on an originally Protestant paradigm of religion as textuality and transcendence, in pre-colonial India, such supernatural men of influence often stood at the centre of religious life.[7] Despite the spread of a modern discourse of 'religion' among both Hindus and Muslims, these blessed men and their protected partisans tenaciously resisted the new paradigm of textual and transcendent religiosity. Whether through simple camaraderie or through playing Pascal's wager, British officers were also sometimes drawn into these traditions of supernatural warfare. On the festival of Dassehra, dedicated to the victory of the warrior god Rāma, Hindu subalterns would gather the weapons of their British officers for ritual blessing. In one memoir, we read how in the Poona cantonment of the 1920s, 'all weapons and horses and chariots are especially blessed. [The Rajput orderly] Devi Das made a pyramid of Squire's [Squire Portal of the 2nd

Royal Lancers] sword, guns, rifles, hog-spears and service revolver and garlanded them.'[8]

These connections between soldiers and religion were much older than the European presence in India, and, in the mid-seventeenth century, the French travelling jeweller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605–89) wrote of Muslim *faqīrs* who were formerly in military service.[9] Describing them as 'all well armed, the majority with bows and arrows, some with muskets, and the remainder with short pikes', Tavernier left no doubt as to the martial abilities of these 'fakirs' or 'dervishes'. Whether in his weaponry or more subtle tools, the forgotten legacy of the holy man's violence is seen in the paraphernalia of the *sādhū*'s trident (*trisūl*), staff (*danda*) and bladed discus (*chakra*) no less than the *faqīr*'s traditional axe (*tabarzīn*) and standard (*ʿalam*). These 'dreadful objects so familiar' have been too often seen as non-functional props for theological formulae and moral virtue, whereas their symbolism – and at times their actual use – instead lay vested in the more basic power associated with physical violence.[10]

Tavernier's later reference to the tiger-skin attire of the *faqīrs* echoed a sartorial symbolism of feral power that from India to Central Asia and Iran was shared by warriors and holy men. Interchangeably of leopard or tiger skin, these sartorial pelts were respectively known as *palangīna* or *babr bayān*. An illustration from a *Shāhnāma* painted in Iran in 911/1505 shows the Persian warrior hero Rustam wearing both tiger and leopard skins into battle.[11] The pelt of the big cat was long to remain the favoured garment of antinomian *faqīrs* until their gradual 'taming' with the religious modernisation of Riza Shah and the British and Russian Empires.[12] Nonetheless, travellers reported the existence of shops in Persia selling these and other dervish accoutrements to would-be Sufi mendicants well into the nineteenth century. Like the animal skins that Hindu and Muslim ascetics wore in reflection of this imagery of violent power, in an elision of their originally practical purposes, the former weapons of these holy warriors have survived the modern taming of the holy man so as to be read as only 'spiritually' symbolic objects. Other *faqīrs* relied on powers of shape-shifting to supplement their tangible weapons. Like other supernatural warriors in both India and Central Asia, when surprised upon the battlefield, the Mughal *faqīr* Shāh Palangpōsh ('the leopard-skin clad', d. 1110/1699) was even capable of physically transforming himself into the terrible guise of a glowering tiger.[13] There is reason to think that Shāh Palangpōsh's transformation was far from unique and part of a wider tradition of specialist skills cultivated by such battle-hardened *faqīrs*.[14] On a more material level, the adaptation of the human body through the fixing to it various types of weaponry also drew on such animal models, as in the case of the *bāgh-nakh* or 'tiger's claws', most

famously used in Śivājī's murder of the Mughal general Afzal Khān in 1070/1659.[15] The borders between the worlds of animals and men remained passable, like the domains of body and spirit, of *mīrī* and *pīrī*, from which the holy warrior drew in equal part for his powers.

Belief in the help lent by *faqīrs* on the field of war was widespread in pre-colonial India. Since this book is concerned with the survival and transformation of these traditions in the colonial period, it is worth examining several of them in some detail. In the Hyderabad region with which we are concerned, the most famous of such stories relates to the foundation of the rule of the Nizams themselves. In this story, the first Nizam and founder of Hyderabad State, Nizām al-Mulk Āsaf Jāh (d. 1161/1748), is said to have been granted his conquests through the help of his contemporary holy man, Nizām al-dīn Awrangābādī (d. 1142/1729).[16] In outline, the story recounts how during the meeting of Nizām al-dīn with the Mughal general Nizām al-Mulk, the *faqīr* predicted that the general would come to rule a great kingdom in his own right, handing him seven of the nine flat breads (*rōtīs*) that he held in his hands. When the prediction came true, Nizām al-Mulk is said to have chosen yellow (by tradition the favourite colour of Nizām al-dīn) and the round shape of the *rōtī* for the design of his battle standard.[17] In other versions of the story, the general came to Nizām al-dīn asking his permission to found a new state named after himself, but the *faqīr* refused permission unless the state and the title of its ruler were named after him instead, that is, after the *faqīr* Nizām al-dīn. Since the general agreed, this according to the story was how the ruler of Hyderabad came to adopt the title of 'Nizām'.[18]

Another well-known tradition relates to Nizām al-Mulk's victory at the battle of Shakar Kera in 1137/1724, which, in bringing him lasting control of the Deccan region, laid the foundations of Hyderabad State. According to this story, Nizām al-Mulk's adversary at Shakar Kera, the Mughal governor of the Deccan Mubāriz Khān, was being protected by a *faqīr* called Shāh Dawla who had given him his cloak (*gudrī*) as a blessing-laden talisman.[19] On hearing this, Nizām al-Mulk went to beg his own supernatural patron Nizām al-dīn to help him. Having spent the following night in prayer in his tent on the battlefield, as dawn broke on the day of the battle, Nizām al-dīn ordered Nizām al-Mulk to go to his own tent, where, to his delight, he found his rival's talismanic cloak. To further augur victory, Nizām al-dīn made protective handprints (known as *panja*) appear over the tents of Nizām al-Mulk's army. Sure enough, the battle was won.[20]

However, Nizām al-dīn's influence over the first ruler of Hyderabad was disputed elsewhere in the state's territories. In oral traditions from

Balapur to the north of Hyderabad, it was the Naqshbandī holy man Shāh ʿInāyat Allāh (d. 1117/1705) who was placed in Nizām al-dīn's role in the story of the *rōtīs*.[21] The Balapur version may point to an older version of the story than the one associating it with Nizām al-dīn: the Mughal historian Lālā Mansārām's eighteenth-century chronicle of the deeds of Nizām al-Mulk refers to the ruler's attachment to a *faqīr* named Shāh ʿInāyat Mujtabā (Shāh ʿInāyat 'the Chosen'). Mansārām adds that this *faqīr* made a prediction about Nizām al-Mulk's future greatness and that the ruler always bore the *faqīr*'s standard into battle as his personal insignia.[22] This tradition clearly echoes Nizām al-dīn's claim of originating the Hyderabad flag and was perhaps connected to the fact that one of Nizām al-Mulk's most important battles for control of the Deccan was fought outside the small town of Balapur.[23] Its displacement of Nizām al-dīn also demonstrates the competitive character of the miraculous service industry.

Such tales of *faqīrs* and battlefields have long been known in different forms throughout India. Another such oral tradition concerns Nizām al-dīn's co-disciples of Shāh Kalīm Allāh of Delhi (d. 1142/1729), the well-known Hyderabadi saints Shāh Yūsuf al-dīn Qādirī (d. 1121/1709) and Shāh Sharaf al-dīn Qādirī (d. *c*. 1121/1709). Like Nizām al-dīn, both holy men travelled in the Deccan with the Mughal armies of conquest. A narrative concerning them that is told in both Hyderabad and Delhi reflects the setting of the imperial camp in the story of Nizām al-dīn. The timing of the narrative, like that of Nizām al-dīn's intercession at the battle of Shakar Khera, is decisively fixed within a clear historical framework and relates to the Mughal conquest of Hyderabad's predecessor city of Golkonda in 1098/1687. According to the story of Yūsuf al-dīn and Sharaf al-dīn, the blessed men were in their tent one night reading the Qurʿān when, apart from their tent, the whole camp was flattened by a great storm. The princely supplicant was Awrangzeb, who immediately came to the *faqīrs*' tent to beg for help with his campaign, the camp being situated near to the great fort of the Qutb Shāh rulers at Golkonda. After persistent requests, the holy men submitted and wrote a message with charcoal on a piece of country tile and then ordered the Emperor to deliver it to a cobbler – in fact a *santo incognito* – residing just beneath the fort. Awrangzeb returned from the cobbler with a message in reply, which explained that there was a great spiritual force protecting the fort. Greatly distressed, the Emperor begged the saints to help him once again, and, in response, the saints wrote another message to the cobbler. On receipt of this rustic message, the saintly cobbler immediately stood up in a frenzy and left his post of guarding the fort. Surely enough, the following day, Golkonda fell to the armies of Awrangzeb through the

faqīrs' efforts.[24] In both this narrative and that of Nizām al-dīn's help on the battlefield, we see the same motifs of the cryptic ostracon, the army camp, the morose prince and the final military victory with the faqīrs' mysterious and understated help.

In India, as in other parts of the Islamic world, stories of dynastic conquest were long associated with *faqīr* figures and provide some of the most memorable narratives in many historical traditions.[25] In the Hyderabad region, it was the story of Nizām al-dīn and Nizām al-Mulk that became the most famous of them, though similar narratives relate to the foundation of other eighteenth-century successor states. In one of these, the wandering *faqīr* Sābir Shāh is said to have granted Ahmad Shāh Abdalī (r. 1160/1747–1187/1773) the nascent state of Afghanistan by placing a wheat crown upon his head during his coronation ceremony.[26] Even the Mughal historian Khāfī Khān described a visit by Awrangzeb to Shaykh Burhān at Burhanpur during the course of which the *faqīr* confirmed Awrangzeb's kingship.[27] Again, such traditions were by no means the unique preserve of Muslim holy men, and comparable traditions exist with regard to Hindu figures, *nāth yōgīs* in particular. One example is the account of the foundation of the state of Nepal in 1768 by Prthivinārāyan Shāh with the aid of the *nāth yōgī* Bhagavantanāth.[28] The *yōgī* Mastnāth (d. *c.* 1808) is similarly said to have supernaturally helped Mān Singh of Marwar to regain his throne from his treacherous cousin Bhīm Singh during the siege of Chittor, a tale which carries echoes of the Deccan traditions.[29] Mastnāth also had a taste for the moral shortcomings of the Mughal emperors, and one nineteenth-century biography described him predicting the demise of Shāh ʿĀlam II (second reign 1203/1788–1221/1816) and the downfall of the Mughals *en somme*.

These legends were not limited to folk tradition, and such battlefield and siege stories also registered in the Persian historiographical tradition in South India. The early nineteenth-century *Tazkirat al-bilād wa'l hukām* of Mīr Husayn ʿAlī Kirmānī (d. after 1225/1810) records the help given to the warrior Munawwar Khān by the wandering ecstatic *faqīr* Shāh Miskīn Majzūb during his siege of Kurnul and in his subsequent encounter with the ruler of Mysore, Haydar ʿAlī.[30] Like narrative itself, the holy men rely on the same repertoire of special effects. As well as transforming political history into *Heilsgeschichte*, the imprecise nature of the holy man's help mirrored the kinds of miracles witnessed by their clients who, as we see again in the following chapters, included colonial soldiers requiring similar kinds of assistance. Given the fact that the soldiers we discuss in this book lived in cantonments beside the towns in which such saintly battlefield helpers as Shāh Palangpōsh, Nizām al-dīn and Yūsuf al-dīn lay buried, we can be reasonably sure that they were aware of



Figure 1 Indian Muslim *faqīr* of the *qalandar* sect, *c.* 1830.

the famous stories that we have recounted, stories which as part of their religious heritage helped shape expectations of their relationship with their own holy men. Aside from the oral channels in which these narratives circulated, they continued to flourish in the colonial era through their presence in popular Urdu works from Hyderabad. In the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, for example, the story of Nizām al-Mulk's supernatural victory in the battle of Shakar Kera was recounted in the famous *Mishkāt al-Nabuwwa* of the Hyderabadi Sufi Ghulām ʿAlī

Qādirī (d. 1258/1842) and the *Mahbūb-e-Zū'l-Minan* of the Hyderabadi historian ʿAbd al-Jabbār Khān Malkapūrī.[31] In 1915, even such a key proponent of a modernist Islam as Muhammad Iqbāl recognised the familiarity of the trope of the *faqīr* among soldiers. He adapted it in his *Asrār-e-khūdī* ('The Secrets of the Self') as part of his verse critique of the old order:

> In the Deccan was a great noise of war,
> His army stood on the battle-field.
> He went to the Sheikh of heaven-high dignity
> That he might receive his blessing:
> The Moslem turns from this world to God
> And strengthens policy with prayer.[32]

Via poem, biography or folktale, pre-colonial stories of *faqīrs* and battles were transmitted to the sepoys of British India. As we see in the next chapters, the colonial sepoy continued to rely on the services of such holy men, albeit in ways that were alternatively constrained and encouraged by British rule.

In understanding the intertwining military and religious culture that fed pre-colonial traditions of supernatural warfare, it is important to recognise the role of famine and other economic factors in the periodic rise in recruits to both armed bands and *faqīr* and *sādhū* orders with their alternative economy of booty and begging. This is best seen in the infamous 'Thugee' movement, which (like *faqīr* groups) through its co-option of such military titles as *sūbedār* and *jamaʿdār* appropriated the military and organisational vocabulary of the state.[33] Echoing the *faqīrs*' co-option of royal symbolism in their pursuit of power, the Thugs often referred to their violent life of wealth and freedom as *pādshāhī kām*, 'royal work'.[34] For all their familiar association with Hindus, the Thugee bands absorbed members from a variety of 'religious' backgrounds, while reports in the wake of the long famines of the 1790s in the Deccan suggest that there existed other similar multi-religious groups who adopted the symbolic repertoire of the *faqīr*.[35] To ignore the symbolic trade between mendicancy and violence on the grounds that these bands were not representatives of 'true religion' is to ignore the alternative moral universe in which such communities operated. This rendered physical and super-physical power a central component of religiosity in pre-modern India, albeit not one that was without its many (and ultimately successful) critics among Hindu and Muslim reformists no less than their colonial Christian counterparts. In such contexts we might go as far as to say that the term 'religion' serves as little more than a cipher for the endless configurations

of power, actual or desired: power to crush enemies, to save the sick, to bring fortune, to live forever.

For the present book, what is more important than the scale of physical violence associated with the Muslim 'warrior ascetics' of pre-colonial India is that, like the similar fighting ascetics of the Hindu and Sikh *akhārās* ('wrestling grounds', '*sādhū* bands'), *faqīrs* themselves became an important part of India's armed brigades through the militant flexibility of their renunciation of family ties and their mobility alongside their command of supernatural powers.[36] In his basic functions, here the *faqīr* was not unlike the supernatural patrons that accompanied warriors into battle in other parts of the world, whether among Byzantine Christians, the nomads of the Central Asian steppe or the Vikings of the European north.[37] In order to formulate an 'insider' history of the Indian soldier's life, it is therefore essential to take seriously the close relationships that thousands of sepoys developed with their *faqīr* patrons, relationships that alternatively strained or reinforced their parallel ties to their European officers. As with other aspects of customary religious practice in India, the affiliations of religious practice were primarily defined by the vertical relationship between patron and client.[38] Like other social relationships, those between a 'devotee' and his 'master' were based on a pragmatic model of reciprocity and exchange. Supernatural protection was in this sense social capital, and, as such, a marketable service.[39] By the colonial period, whether among sepoys, townsmen or peasants, these ties to *faqīr* patrons were so widespread as to have substantially infiltrated the structures of kinship and become shared among extended families and inherited across generations.

In this way, the embedding of the *faqīrs* in a system of patronage that proliferated the sepoy's kinship networks closely reflected the sepoy's relationship with the army, in that entry to the army depended on a system of patronage and recommendation that in practice almost always mirrored the soldier's extended family ties. Children were born as the clients of their fathers' and uncles' *faqīrs*, just as in time they entered their fathers' and uncles' regiments. Although it was more often the spiritual landed gentry of established saintly families rather than the freewheeling lone *faqīrs* who fulfilled this role of hereditary religious patron, the categories of the landed institutionalised Sufi and the mendicant Sufi were fluid. Both groups in any case termed themselves *faqīrs*, even if in British usage the term was usually reserved for mendicants. In Chapter 2 we thus see a landed and learned Sufi with a sepoy clientele spending part of his career gathering the kudos of the freewheeling *faqīr*. In Chapter 3 we see such a *faqīr* acquiring the saintly apparatus of shrine, land-holdings and hagiography to pass on to his heirs. Since (with certain exceptions) the

character of the affiliations between *faqīrs* and their followers was primarily social rather than doctrinal, their client – patron bonds also assured the spread of Sufi affiliations among large numbers of non-Muslims. Trained in their miraculous *savoir-faire*, the *faqīrs* were looked on as practical people: they were above all men who got things done. Through the combination of the pre-colonial association between warriors and holy men and the prevalence of such patronal Sufi affiliations in the rural areas from which most sepoys were recruited, the *faqīrs* accompanied the Indian soldier on his new career under British command. In Hyderabad at least, the *faqīrs* stubbornly held on to their sepoy clients as they adapted to a changing culture of combat under the East India Company and the Raj. Through the imprisonment of 'insane' sepoys to the provision of narrative settings for their subversive miracles and the subsequent circulation of their stories through the redeployment of soldiers to new stations, in substantial part the Islam of the Hyderabadi sepoy owed both its character and success to the military milieu in which it was reared.[40]

Of guns and gods: towards a 'newer' military history

When we come to the study of military history, the long-standing culturally Protestant underpinnings of English-language historiography of the army life have created a barrier to understanding the lifeworlds of the native soldiers who spent their careers under British command. From at least the beginning of the colonial era, the spirit of David Howe has haunted military historiography. While the scores of campaign and regimental historians of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century drew on the same physicalist paradigm of historical agency as the other Protestant (and thence 'professional') historians of the day, there was also an important ideological dimension to the denial of extra-human and extra-physical agency. For the denial in the regimental or campaign history of any factor other than grit, valour and manly agency served as a recognition and valorisation of the individual soldier and the chain of command in the cause of victory. To impute success to anything other than soldierly action and the officer's command would be to question the paradigm of valour and heroic action that supported the panegyric campaign history and the military ideology it served to maintain. The suggestion that a campaign could be won through any means other than the harnessing of private valour to collective discipline undermined the organisational and ideological structure that characterised Europe's armies from the eighteenth century onwards. In imputing a substitute for the authority of the officer's rank and the agency of the soldier's effort, the alternative authority of the

miraculous holy man had the potential to undermine the organisational basis of the modern army.[41]

This suggestion of ideologies of supernatural and human agency competing in a military context renders it worthwhile to pursue some of the official British literature on 'army religion' that was drawn up during the colonial period with which the following chapters deal. It is a matter of some significance that the first official chaplains attached to British army regiments date from Cromwell's creation of the New Model Army in the mid-seventeenth century. This institutionalisation of a decisively Protestant form of religiosity into the army was to have long-standing repercussions on the religious attitudes of the British soldier.[42] For several centuries Protestant Christianity – and its characteristic attitudes towards 'superstition', miracle-working and embodied holiness – held a religious monopoly on the British Army (as opposed to the Indian Army), and freedom of religion in the British Army was only granted to Presbyterians in 1827, to Catholics in 1836 and to 'other Protestants' as late as 1862. This offers a striking contrast to conditions in Britain's quite separate Company and (after 1858) imperial armies in India in which the practical demands of recruitment had meant that the recognition of not only other forms of Christianity but also of non-Christian religions had a far longer history. But in India too, the Protestant army chaplain or 'padre' held an important and influential place in the enclosed world of the barrack, and, as we see in Chapter 2, with the rise of evangelical enthusiasm in early nineteenth-century Britain, both army chaplains and evangelical officers serving in India became more vocal in their criticisms of the religious forms of the sepoys. This did not necessarily take the form of outright attempts to convert sepoys, which was, in any case, officially banned, but instead manifested itself in culturally Protestant notions of what constituted true religion as opposed to superstition and charlatanry. As we see repeatedly in the following chapters, it was the religious forms associated with the *faqīr* that raised the greatest contempt and, after 1857 in particular, suspicion.

We can get some sense of British conceptions of the place of official religion in the army from British Army publications on the duties of military chaplains. Abroad as at home, the forms of religion promoted by Britain's armies were subservient to the practical objectives of the institution. Training manuals were quite clear in their functional sense of the chaplain's role: to foster the morale that was conducive to practical soldierly triumph. As Revd Percy Middleton Brumwell (1881–1963) summed up his advice to army chaplains on their duties, 'Morale is of vital importance to victory. Morale has its bases [sic] on religion.'[43] Here was a distinctly Protestant notion of practical religion in which miracles

had no place: according to Anglican doctrine, miracles had ended with the Age of the Apostles, and centuries of state support of the Church of England had rendered such anti-miraculous attitudes a central part of robust Anglo-Saxon 'common sense'.[44] The Indian Muslim soldier's own religious demands were similarly practical but were conceived within a worldview that still kept a place for miraculous intervention. In short, the British soldier's religion was decisively not intended to access the supernatural reinforcement that had long characterised the religious forms of the Indian soldier. When it came to the role of Islam in Britain's colonial armies, then military officials found themselves caught between a pragmatic respect of sepoys' religious rights, a growing evangelical critique of the Indian Army's promotion of 'heathendom' and a basic requirement to ensure the loyalty of their men to the chain of command. Despite the opposition of many officers of the old school, evangelical Protestant Christianity infiltrated the native ranks nonetheless. The consequences of this for the religion of the sepoys of Hyderabad are examined in Chapter 2.[45]

As British officers in the Indian Army were aware in their paranoia over the supposedly divided loyalties of their Muslim troops and the ever-present rumours of seditious holy men, religion was always a potentially subversive force in military life. As such, it needed to be channelled and constrained so as to best serve the interests of the army – that is, the achievement of its commanders' objectives.

Similar attempts to redefine and control sepoy religion seem to have been at work among other European armies in Asia. In the Dutch colonies in Java at the turn of the twentieth century, it was no less a figure than the great Orientalist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) who formulated an official policy towards Muslim soldiers that differentiated between what he saw as the 'religious' and 'political' directives of Islam, ensuring that the army promoted the former among its troops no less avidly than it proscribed the latter.[50]

This was no less true of the kind of religion fostered among British troops than it was among Indians. In this respect, the absence of a sense of the miraculous in the writings of the professional chaplains of the British Army is notable.[46] Even in the case of Catholic chaplains such as Revd Henry Day, who attended to Irish soldiers fighting Ottoman troops in the Great War, the presence of any agent in battle other than the soldier himself was inconceivable (or at least inadmissible).[47] Like other army chaplains, Day was a fierce defender of the moral purpose of violence: '*war in itself*, as distinguished from mere brute contention, is *not* immoral; it may indeed be noble virtue', he wrote.[48] Echoes in India of the wider Protestant critique of the dissimulating hypocrisy of miracles and their

mongers are found in the unflattering portrait of an Irish Catholic army chaplain in Kipling's story 'The Mutiny of the Mavericks' (1891). The Irish soldiers on Indian service thus loved

the regimental Roman Catholic Chaplain, the fat Father Dennis, who held the keys of Heaven and Hell, and blared like an angry bull when he desired to be convincing. Him also it loved because on occasions of stress he was used to tuck up his cassock and charge with the rest into the merriest of the fray, where he always found, good man, that the saints sent him a revolver when there was a fallen private to be protected, or – but this came as an afterthought – his own grey beard to be guarded.[49]

Much may be gleaned in this regard from the major survey of the religion of the British soldier that emerged from a conference of twenty-eight churchmen and chaplains at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, in 1917 resulting in the publication of the voluminous *The Army and Religion* in 1919.[51] The major theme of the conference was the rise among the average Tommy in the trenches of what (in characteristically theological language) the committee termed as 'Natural Religion'. While, as many soldiers and chaplains reported from the front, 'In times of danger men cry out to God', there was precious little evidence that the average soldier's sense of religion had anything to do with the 'official' Christianity that the committee of concerned churchmen wished to promote. Indeed, one army officer went so far as to report that in its lack of christological reference, 'The theism of the Army is Mohammedan rather than Christian'! If the 'trench fatalism' that the committee interpreted as a turn towards natural religion undermined the official religion of the Anglican Church, it also shows the same impact of institutional contexts on the shaping of religion that we have seen among the sepoys. Life in the army was creating its own peculiarly martial and fatalistic brand of Christianity, which was as malleable to the demands of war in France as Islam was on the other side of the world. In the words of one British soldier, 'History would seem to stamp such fatalism as the best seed ground for martial virtues, as the history of Islam will bear witness [...] The soldier's God is once more the God of Battles, who clothes Himself with the storm.'[52] The Tommies were demanding a martial religion of their own, a cult that actually worked on the field of war: they too, perhaps, needed a *faqīr*.

In spite of what another soldierly informant called the 'practical religion' of men at war, in its hundreds of pages of discussion, the Committee of Enquiry upon the Army and Religion made not the slightest mention of the possibility of miracles, of the prospect that the Christian God might intervene in events to favour his faithful. The theological legacy of

Luther's banishing of miracles to the Age of the Apostles held strong in the face of the English soldiers' demands for a god of war. Even as rumours of miracles emerged from the trenches, none of the Committee's churchmen were willing to swerve from the Protestant doctrine of the cessation of miracles and the Humean assumptions of their British education.[53] In spite of the soldiers' own religious experiences, and their 'practical' need for an intercessionary god of battle, neither their chaplains nor their chroniclers were willing to recognise the religion that the Tommies were creating in their barracks and their trenches. Given the etymological and institutional origins of the Christian army chaplain, this was deeply ironic. For in its derivation from the late antique *cappellanus*, the office of chaplain originally denoted those employed to carry the miraculous cape of the former soldier St Martin of Tours (d. *c*. 400) to ensure the success of the Christian Franks in battle. It was an expectation that was not after all so different from those surrounding the Indian *faqīr*'s cloak at the battle of Shakar Kera.

If it must remain the work of others to piece together the religious history of the Christian soldier, in the following pages we can at least recover something of that of his Indian Muslim counterpart. While the desire of the British soldier for such martially effectual chaplains went unanswered by the Protestant establishment, as the following chapters show, in India the 'padres' of their Muslim contemporaries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were more willing to supply such miraculous reinforcements. Having laid out in general terms the distinct trajectories in which religion interacted with military life in India and Britain, it is now time to turn towards the details of our case studies to see how these distinctive traditions and demands of religion intersected in the colonial regiments of Hyderabad.

2 The padre and his miraculous services

A fakir (a religious well known in the East,
Not much like a parson, still less like a priest)

Richard Owen Cambridge, *The Fakir* (1756)

The *life* and life of Afzal Shāh

Almost everything that is known about the life of Afzal Shāh Biyābānī (d. 1273/1856), a nineteenth-century Muslim *faqīr* attached to the sepoys of the Hyderabad Contingent, is found in an Urdu biography entitled *Afzal al-karāmāt* that was completed in 1331/1913 and published shortly afterwards.[1] *Afzal al-karāmāt* was written by Muhyī al-dīn Darwēsh Qādirī (d. 1362/1943), the son-in-law of Afzal Shāh's son and heir Sarwar Biyābānī (d. 1331/1913).[2] In a very real sense, what Muhyī al-dīn was writing was not folklore but history, albeit a history constructed on its own epistemological foundations. The main focus of *Afzal al-karāmāt* was a holy man who had died almost sixty years before its completion, so its main sources of information were Afzal Shāh's surviving sepoy disciples and his son Sarwar Biyābānī (d. 1331/1912). Even in his use of such oral sources, Muhyī al-dīn only relayed stories concerning figures whose families were known to his local readership, a selective use of oral tradition that offered both a mechanism and rhetoric of authentication by relying (in the spirit of Hadīth scholarship) on 'respectable' informants belonging to Hyderabad's military and landowning classes. As part of the continuum of saintly biographies produced by Hyderabadi scholars well into the twentieth century, from the perspective of its author and readership, *Afzal al-karāmāt* was in this sense a work of history, a statement of facts about events in the world. For all their neglect by scholars, such biographies are key documents for the history of the Indian soldier.

After an introductory account (*muqaddima*) of Afzal Shāh's ancestors, the opening chapter of *Afzal al-karāmāt* gives an overview of Afzal Shāh's life, providing the standard categories of data on his ancestry, education, travels and death, which were long familiar to the Muslim biographical

tradition.[3] We learn that Afzal Shāh was born in the small town of Qazipeth in 1210/1795 and spent most of his life between there and the adjoining cantonment town of Hanamkonda, before dying at the age of sixty-three lunar years in 1273/1856. His ancestry was said to reach back to Sayyid Ahmad ibn ʿAlī al-Rifāʿī (d. 578/1182), the founder of the Rifāʿī order of 'howling dervishes' which was famed for its displays of snake-handling, body-piercing and fire-walking and which long enjoyed the following of many of Hyderabad's Arab soldiers.[4] Afzal Shāh's later ancestor Ziyā al-dīn (d. 909/1523) traveled to the Deccan from his North Indian home in Multan, seeking service with the Bahmanī sultans; it was Ziyā al-dīn who first acquired the name Biyābānī ('of the wilderness') that was passed down to his descendants.[5] During the reign of the founder of Hyderabad State, Nizām al-Mulk Āsaf Jāh (r. 1137/1724–1161/1748), Ziyā al-dīn's descendant Sayyid Fāzil Biyābānī travelled to study in Nizām al-Mulk's capital at Aurangabad, before being appointed as the *qāzī* or magistrate of Warangal to the north of Hyderabad city, where he was presented with a living (*maʿāsh-e-qazāʾat*) of three nearby villages.[6] Like many *qasba* towns in North India, the origins of the small town of Qazipeth where Afzal Shāh was born were in large part due to the Biyābānī family, who, as Sufis and members of the *ʿulamā*, over time were granted further landholdings (*jāgīrs*) in the area.

Like other families of learned and blessed men in the small towns of Hyderabad, the Biyābānī family acted as hereditary judges (*qāzīs*) for their surrounding communities.[7] After Sayyid Fāzil settled in Qazipeth, he wrote his *Panj ganj* ('Five Treasures') on the history of his kinsmen, before dying in the *haveli* he constructed in Qazipeth for his family in 1163/1750.[8] As the armies of the East India Company began to appear in Hyderabad over the following decades, Sayyid Fāzil's son Ghulām Husayn Biyābānī settled in neighbouring Hanamkonda, where his grandson Ghulām Muhyī al-dīn Biyābānī – the father of Afzal Shāh – dwelled after him. As Hanamkonda was steadily transformed into a cantonment station for the horsemen of the Nizam's Cavalry and their British commanders in the wake of the treaties of the early nineteenth century, it was here in the early 1800s that the sepoys' future 'padre' Afzal Shāh was partly raised.

Like many important holy men in nineteenth-century Hyderabad, Afzal Shāh thus belonged to a long family tradition of religious expertise, through which, like other occupational groups or castes, career trajectories were determined in advance through opportunities and status provided at birth. *Barakat* – or 'blessing' – was, after all, inheritable, and, despite the criticism of centuries, it was blood that was typically the most recognised means for its transference.[9] Indeed, Afzal Shāh's father, Ghulām Muhyī al-dīn Biyābānī (d. 1222/1807), also acted in

the capacity of *qāzī*, and it was in the expectation of continuing this family occupation that Afzal Shāh received his education.[10] We should not consider the roles of *qāzī* and *faqīr* as necessarily contradictory, for, until the radical separation of jurisprudence and mysticism in many South Asian *madrasas* in the twentieth century, the two traditions were often regarded as complementary wings of Muslim authority. It was probably in this practical legal capacity that the Hindus of the Warangal district that surrounded Qazipeth also came into contact with the Biyābānī family, which has maintained a Hindu as well as Muslim following to the present day. It seems likely that over the long term some of these Hindus were acculturated (or 'converted') to Islam through their exposure to the practical administrative culture of Islamic law as applied in its local setting.[11]

Afzal al-karāmāt informs us that as a child Afzal Shāh enjoyed horse riding and sword practice and would often ride – sometimes alone, sometimes in company – to the military cantonment at Hanamkonda where he would later gain most of his followers.[12] Like other Muslim boys of gentle birth in this period, a basic training in the arts of war formed an essential part of his upbringing, a gentlemanly familiarity with sabre and bridle that later no doubt contributed to his ease in the company of cavalrymen and to their ease in his company. The patronal holy man was never entirely dissimilar to his protégés but partook in their skills as they partook in his. Like others of his background, Afzal Shāh was also able to speak several languages, speaking in Urdu and Telegu from day to day but in the learned lingua francas of Arabic or Persian when he received educated or courtly visitors.[13] He received his initial education under the tutelage of his father in Qazipeth and then, at the age of twelve, was sent to study under a certain Faqīr Allāh Shāh in nearby Warangal. Here we are told of Afzal Shāh learning the ascetic and wonder-working ways of the *faqīr*.[14] Later in his youth he traveled to Hyderabad – around 90 miles to the south-west of Qazipeth – in order to continue his legal studies. There he stayed in the city's Qutbigura quarter at the residence of his uncle Mawlwī Sayyid Murtazā Husaynī and became the student of two respected scholars of the religious sciences (*ʿulūm-e-dīniyya*), Mawlwī Qutb al-dīn and Mawlwī Hāfiz Sayyid Sadr al-dīn.[15] Afzal Shāh's learned credentials were becoming quite clear and in Hyderabad he then became a disciple of Ghulām ʿAlī Qādirī (d. 1258/1842), the writer of the great Hyderabadi prosopography of blessed men entitled *Mishkat al-nabuwwa* and cousin of Afzal Shāh's father.[16] However, despite his blood lineage as a descendant of the founder of the Rifāʿī order, according to *Afzal al-karāmāt*, Afzal Shāh's own Sufi affiliation was to the Qādirī and Chishtī orders, affiliations of respectability compared to the blood-letting tendencies of the 'howling' Rifāʿīs.[17]

In accordance with traditional Muslim notions of the stages of life, Afzal Shāh is said to have been twenty-four years old when he completed both his book studies and his spiritual apprenticeship in Hyderabad. At this point, in similar line with *faqīr* tradition, he is said to have decided to abandon the city to seek God through faring in the wilderness (*sahrānawardī*), of which there was plenty in the hilly jungles around Hyderabad. Setting off for the Papanapeth hills and the Medak region to the north, Afzal Shāh spent the next four years in physical mastery of the self (*mujāhidat*) before returning home.[18] An account of the kinds of austerities undertaken by such *faqīrs* is given in the memoirs of the former North Indian sepoy Dīn Muhammad ('Dean Mahomet'), who vividly spoke of their 'torturing their bodies, and suffering a variety of punishments […] Some pierce their flesh with spears, and drive daggers through their hands; others carry on their palms, for a length of time, burning vessels which they shift from hand to hand: many walk, with bare feet on sharp iron spikes fixed in a kind of sandal.'[19]

If we can trust the biographical timeline given in *Afzal al-karāmāt*, this would place Afzal Shāh back at Qazipeth and the Hanamkonda Cantonment in around 1825. Once back in Qazipeth, he continued his austerities, practising the famous 'inverted prayer' (*namāz-e-maʿkūs*) in which he hung upside down from a tree in the nearby forest and sitting in divine remembrance (*yād-e-ilāhī*) on top of the neighbouring Buragata hill.[20] Like other narrative historians from East or West, here the biography's author Muhyī al-dīn was relying on a pre-existing narrative template concerning the holy men of earlier generations, and, as though to cast doubt on Orientalist assumptions of the decline of Islam in the colonial era, the biographer drew comparison between Afzal Shāh's practices and those of such sanctified 'ancients' (*mutaqadimīn*) as Junayd Baghdādī (d. 298/910) and Abūʾl Nasr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988).[21] Through punishing his body on Buragata hill he had become the ascetic master of supernatural powers, completing a kind of ascetic course in parallel to the physical training of the Indian soldier. Despite the formulaic character of the account, there seems little reason to doubt the likelihood of Afzal Shāh's long periods of ascetic practice, which continued to be respected by the no less physically disciplined Indian soldiers of the colonial era. There was, after all, a kind of symbiosis between the bodily training of the soldier and ascetic, the one cultivating inner powers through depleting the flesh and the other cultivating outer powers through building the same muscles. It was a commonality that united ascetics and soldiers together, just as it set them apart from other professional groups in India.

The text also emphasised that in line with his family tradition Afzal Shāh took to spending a few days each week attending to judicial work

(*quzzāt*) at his 'office' (*daftar*) in the soldier's market (*lashkar bāzār*) at Hanamkonda cantonment.[22] He was therefore doubly useful to the sepoys: he was both the ascetic master of strange powers and the no-less-useful legal adviser and *munshī*. In this manner, Afzal Shāh lived out the remainder of his life between Hanamkonda and Qazipeth, winning the sepoys' loyalty through attending to the bureaucratic dealings that came with their relationship to a document-reliant empire and through the admiration that came through the physical display of his part-time penances. However, good bookkeeping and a show of piety can only win a man a certain measure of affection, and it is to Afzal Shāh's more extraordinary abilities that his fame was owed. For soon word began to spread of his skills as a supernatural fixer, and strange tales of tiger-taming and rescues from Death's door began to circulate the barracks of the Hanamkonda sepoys. As Afzal Shāh's reputation spread, he gathered a large number of followers, the greater part of whom were foot soldiers and cavalrymen of the Hyderabad Contingent. In the second and third chapters of *Afzal al-karāmāt*, Muhyī al-dīn recounted many of the miracles that Afzal Shāh performed for these sepoy followers.

Before turning towards an examination of these miracles, let us first place the narrative we have recounted of Afzal Shāh's life in *Afzal al-karāmāt* into some of its broader historical contexts. The first thing to note is the pattern of overlap between religious and family networks which Afzal Shāh shared in common with other Indian holy men of his era. He was born into a family of religious notables, whose rural landholdings around Qazipeth would help support him throughout his career. His education was dependent on the support of kinsmen, from his earliest studies at the hands of his father to his student days lodging at the house of an uncle in Hyderabad and his Sufi initiation at the hands of his father's cousin, Ghulām ʿAlī Qādirī. Furthermore, in spite of the many followers that Afzal Shāh attracted, *Afzal al-karāmāt* was written by his grandson-in-law, Muhyī al-dīn Qādirī (who also informs us that the biographical work *Muhāmid hāmid* on Afzal Shāh's teacher Hāfiz Sadr al-dīn was written by his own great-grandfather, Burhān al-dīn Khān).[23] In this sense, the Urdu historiography of the sepoys' holy men was a written reflection of the structures of kinship rather than those of military organisation. In similar vein, despite the affiliation of numerous soldiers to Afzal Shāh (including the subsequent *faqīr* Banē Miyān of Aurangabad), his nominated successor was instead his own son Sarwar Biyābānī, who of course also inherited the family lands at Qazipeth.

In its setting on the edge of the cantonment, the family tradition of Afzal Shāh represented a small coterie of learning that was linked to an older religious economy of Muslim feudal landholders (like the more famous *qasba* towns of North India) at the same time that it drew on a

more flourishing colonial economy based on the earnings of the salaried soldier.[24] In the larger picture of Indian social history, Afzal Shāh's connection to this new economy helps explain why his cult succeeded during this period while many older cults dwindled, as the status of their clients and their sources of income depreciated under British rule.

If the Biyābānī family flourished through its connection to the Hyderabad Contingent and the social world of the colonial cantonment of Hanamkonda, it was also connected to the pre-colonial moral centre of the region in Hyderabad, to which it looked for members of similar families into which to marry its sons and daughters. While we are concerned in this book with examining the profession-based networks through which the cults of the Muslim sepoys spread around Hyderabad, it is therefore important to bear in mind throughout our analysis that kinship formed the perpetual bedrock on which these other developments were built.[25] The emergence of forms of Muslim religious organisation that bore no connection to kinship whatsoever would have to wait until the twentieth century, when older patterns of family structure began to dissolve in the industrialising centres of the Middle East as well as India.[26]

Afzal Shāh was by no means the only Muslim holy man living near the cantonment at Hanamkonda during the middle of the nineteenth century. Outside the great medieval fortress of Warangal a few miles away lay the extensive shrine complex of Maʿshūq Rabbānī (d. 999/1591), which had first flourished under the Qutb Shāh rulers of Golkonda but which continued to be a focus of local pilgrimage through to the twentieth century.[27] The descendants of Maʿshūq Rabbānī were considered able to pass on his blessing power or *barakat*, particularly at the annual celebration of his death each year, and we can surmise that this carnival would have been quite an attraction to the soldiers stationed a few miles away at Hanamkonda. However, as the Hanamkonda cantonment grew during the nineteenth century, it became a focus of *faqīr* activity itself, and, during the last years of Afzal Shāh's life, a naked Muslim ecstatic (*majzūb*) called ʿAbd al-Nabī Shāh (d. 1305/1888) traveled from Nizamabad in the north of Hyderabad State to settle in Hanamkonda. According to *Afzal al-karāmāt*, ʿAbd al-Nabī was a follower of Afzal Shāh, along with another ecstatic *faqīr* called Pīr Muhammad, who also settled near the sepoys in Hanamkonda.[28] Upon ʿAbd al-Nabī's death, a shrine was built for him in the centre of the soldiers' market at Hanamkonda, suggesting the same sepoy patronage of his cult that we see in more detail for Afzal Shāh below.

The presence of such ecstatic *faqīrs* in the military setting of Hanamkonda fitted a much older tradition that had long associated groups of soldiers with raving and frenzied holy men, who would often

accompany them on campaigns. As we see later through the stories associating Afzal Shāh (and especially Banē Miyān) with the soldiers of the Contingent, a key part of the attraction of such figures was their miraculous ability to rescue soldiers from the dangers to which their work exposed them. But we should not overlook the fact that such antinomian and ecstatic *faqīrs* were also a source of amusement and entertainment. Perhaps the best example of this is seen in the case of the fearsome organised 'spectacles' (*mazāhir*) in which the *faqīrs* of the Rifāʿī order would pierce their bodies with skewers, slash their flesh with sabres and gouge out their eyeballs with chisels before astonished audiences.[29] We can easily imagine the appeal of such forms of tough entertaining to groups of off-duty soldiers. It is significant in this respect that Hyderabad's armies actually counted groups of Rifāʿī *faqīrs* among its actual regiments, albeit soldiers serving in the Nizam's private forces rather than those of the Contingent: by the middle of the nineteenth century, eye-gouging on duty was clearly a compromise to tradition too far for the British. But it was a tradition that nonetheless survived through military patronage beyond the formal armies of the Empire. When the deposed king of Spain, Alfonso XIII, visited Hyderabad in the early 1930s, he was treated to such a 'spectacle' performed by Rifāʿī members of the Nizam's Arab Irregular Legion, one of the several military units formed in an attempt to channel the thousands of Arab mercenaries still present in Hyderabad into controlled service.[30]

Having originally spread into India from Baghdad, the Rifāʿī order had a strong presence in Hyderabad throughout the reign of the Nizams.[31] During the nineteenth century, a number of Rifāʿī masters based in Hyderabad city gained a significant enough following to have shrines built for them after their deaths. One such figure was Sayyid Shāh ʿInāyat Allāh Husaynī al-Rifāʿī, who drowned in the great flood of the river Musi in 1908 and was subsequently buried in his own mausoleum. His slightly older contemporary Badīʿ al-dīn al-Rifāʿī (d. 1308/1891), who had migrated to Hyderabad from his birthplace in Qandahar in the north-west of the state, was buried in an earlier shrine in the capital.[32] However, the richest descriptive data on Hyderabad's Rifāʿīs were collected in the opening decades of the twentieth century by E. H. Hunt (1874–1952), the chief medical officer of the Nizam's State Railway.[33] Hunt made a careful study of Rifāʿī practices, placing their headquarters in the macabre setting of a graveyard in the Karwan quarter of Hyderabad's fortified suburb of Golkonda. Having attended the death anniversaries of the Rifāʿī saints who lay buried there, in addition to his fascinating archive of photographs Hunt left a vivid description of

the kind of performances of the Rifāʿī *faqīrs* that would have been enjoyed by Hyderabad's soldiers:

> To the accompaniment of earnest prayer, the burning of incense, and of incessant tomtoms, the fakeers leap into a small clearing in the centre of a crowd which may number 5,000 and pass their iron skewers through their persons [...] Of their special acts, the passing of skewers through the neck, in many directions, is perhaps the most surprising. The levering out of eyeballs is another astonishing feat. One old man can protrude his eye so far that the lids close behind it, and it appears like a teed up golf ball.[34]

As we have seen, Afzal Shāh was himself a descendant of Ahmad ibn ʿAlī al-Rifāʿī, the Iraqi founder of the Rifāʿī order, whose life was celebrated in Hyderabad a few decades after Afzal Shāh's birth in the *Mishkat al-nabuwwa* of his own teacher Ghulām ʿAlī Qādirī.[35] The question remains therefore as to why Afzal Shāh was not presented as a member of the Rifāʿiyya in *Afzal al-karāmāt* but only as an initiate of the Qādirī and Chishtī orders. The answer to this is perhaps simple: despite his distant Rifāʿī family ancestry, Afzal Shāh was only actually initiated into the Chishtī and Qādirī ways. But it may be possible to detect something of the inter-regimental rivalry that often broke out between different regiments separately composed of sepoys drawn from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The Rifāʿī *faqīrs* were thus associated with the Arab irregulars, whose Arabian ancestries the *faqīrs* themselves celebrated. Afzal Shāh, by contrast, associated himself with the Chishtī and Qādirī orders that, with their deeper roots in the soil of Punjab, Bengal and the Deccan, may have been considered as more the cultural property of the Pathan and 'Punjabi Mussulman' soldiers of the Contingent. In an era of multiple Sufi affiliations, there was, after all, no religious reason why Afzal Shāh should not have been promoted by his biographer as a Rifāʿī master as well, in the process drawing on the added legitimacy lent by his bloodline.

Despite the Rifāʿī element in Afzal Shāh's ancestry, it is clear, then, that his Rifāʿī connections were played down in favour of his connections to the Qādiriyya and Chishtiyya. A further explanation for this lies in the landed and learned respectability which Afzal Shāh's family represented. For, compared to the Rifāʿī *faqīrs*, who were generally drawn from Hyderabad's many immigrant Arab mercenaries and their entourages, Afzal Shāh belonged to a different ethnic group and social class. While his biography certainly dwells in detail on the long periods of physical ascesis or 'battling' (*mujāhidāt*) when he dwelt in the hills around Qazipeth and knelt so long in prayer that the skin of his calves sealed with that of his thighs, there is a clear sense in *Afzal al-karāmāt* that these episodes belonged to his

years of youthful training and were only a prelude to the full blossoming of his power in the settled sobriety of adulthood.[36] Besides, as we have seen, Afzal Shāh's authority also drew on the traditions of book-learning and jurisprudence – who, after all, would trust a lawyer who entered the courtroom with a skewer through his eye? Such was not the kind of figure that officers in the colonial army liked their men to associate with. As we have noted, the Rifāʿī *faqīrs* were in any case most closely associated with Arab immigrants to Hyderabad, who continued to form their own distinct military – and thence more generally social – units well into the twentieth century. Given the ways in which ethnicity has often underwritten ties of patronage to Muslim holy men in India, it is also possible that the Rifāʿī element in Afzal Shāh's religious identity was relegated in response to the interregimental rivalries, based on caste, ethnicity as well as religion, that typified the soldier's life in colonial India.[37] In any case, as we see later, by the time *Afzal al-karāmāt* was written, around 1913, the joint colonial and Muslim reformist critique of the barbarous displays of the *faqīrs* typified by the *mazāhir* of the Rifāʿīs would have further deterred the respectable colonial barrister and biographer Muhyī al-dīn from playing up Afzal Shāh's association with them.

The sepoys and the *pādrī*

Most of the followers of Afzal Shāh were Indian cavalrymen and foot soldiers, sowars and sepoys, serving in the Hyderabad Contingent. Three years after Afzal Shāh was born in 1795, the ruler of Hyderabad Nizām ʿAlī Khān had signed the Preliminary Treaty with the East India Company which as we have seen led to the foundation of the Hyderabad Contingent.[38] By 1826 – approximately when Afzal Shāh returned to Hanamkonda from his four years in the wilderness – the five cavalry regiments under British command in Hyderabad became known as the Nizam's Cavalry, which was also supported by a number of infantry regiments. The return of Afzal Shāh to his hometown as both a trained *qāzī* and a renunciant *faqīr* thus coincided with the consolidation of the Contingent and its distribution to such new cantonment towns as Hanamkonda, as well as its main headquarters at Bolarum in the outskirts of Hyderabad city. The cantonment at Hanamkonda, adjacent to the family seat of Afzal Shāh at Qazipeth, was established shortly after the foundation of Bolarum in around 1800. As we have already seen, *Afzal al-karāmāt* claimed that Afzal Shāh often wandered around Hanamkonda as a child, a claim which seems altogether reasonable given the attraction for a child of the drill of soldiers in uniform and the fact that Afzal Shāh's childhood coincided with the years in which the Contingent first spread

around the Nizam's State. In later life, he came into contact with the sepoys through the office for his family business in Islamic law that he maintained in Hanamkonda, to which soldiers would have come with a range of issues, from licensing marriages and settling disputes to helping with the bureaucratic procedures that increasingly characterised colonial army life. It seems likely that it was from this small outpost for the application of Sharīʿa within the context of the Contingent that Afzal Shāh made the contacts with the sepoys that would in time enable the spread of his reputation as a spiritual guide and worker of wonders. In any case, his association with the sepoys of Hanamkonda became the most distinguishing characteristic of his adult career in which, in a purloining of the religious apparatus of the British Empire, he came to be seen as the Muslim 'padre' (*pādrī*) of the Contingent's soldiers.

What is interesting here is that we hear faint traces in the historical record of Indian perceptions that the white man's padres were no less miraculously endowed than their own *faqīr* protectors. This is somewhat ironic given the efforts of many Christian padres and missionaries more generally to preach in opposition to this sort of 'superstitious' religiosity. Nonetheless, during his years as chaplain of the cantonment at Lucknow in the period leading up to the Rebellion of 1857, the Revd Henry Polehampton (or 'the Padré Sahib', as the Indians called him) heard all kinds of rumours about the special powers associated with Christian holy men such as himself. His house in the cantonment was believed to be ghoulishly haunted, for example, such that 'no one but a Padré can live in it!'[39] When the Rebellion finally broke out, he observed how the houses of padres were deliberately spared while others were burned down. 'The natives', he concluded, 'have a superstitious reverence for a "Padré".'[40]

This was by no means an idiosyncrasy of Polehampton or the rebels of Lucknow, for when the Scots evangelical Revd Thomas Hunter was murdered by the town flogger in Sialkot in 1857, all of the sepoys present at the murder refused to be involved in the slaying of a 'padre'.[41] While many evangelicals argued in the wake of the Rebellion that the widespread sparing of the persons and property of Christian chaplains was proof of the affection with which Indians regarded them, it appears instead that this reflected less affection than the fear with which they were regarded. In other words, Christian chaplains were perceived as possessing the same powers as India's other holy men – perhaps still greater powers given the success of their pale-skinned protégés. And so, during times of upheaval, the Christian *pādrīs* were treated with the same careful amnesty shown to the older shrines and homesteads of Muslim and Hindu blessed men. For all his efforts to stamp out 'superstition', the Christian

padre had become absorbed into them like one of Kipling's lost British souls in the upcountry *mofassil*. Presumably, this perception of the British padre as a possessor of special powers was one of the reasons why the followers of such Muslim holy men as Afzal Shāh addressed them as *pādrī*. Just as Hindu holy men adapted the symbolic appurtenances and nomenclature of their Muslim counterparts during the medieval period, when *yōgīs* became widely addressed as *pīrs* (the originally Persian term for a Muslim holy man) and buried in Islamicate mausolea, so in the age of an assertive Christian empire did the symbolism of the Christian padre find its imitators in turn.

The padre's supernatural services

After its account of Afzal Shāh's early life, the greater part of *Afzal al-karāmāt* is taken up with accounts of the miracles that the 'padre' performed for his followers in the Contingent. These stories provide great insight into the religious life of the Indian sepoy, as well as demonstrating the ways in which the army acted as a means of creating and disseminating a new religious cult. The stories of miracles reflected a historical vision whose crucial difference to 'modern' historiography lay not in a disinterest in the 'facts' of recounting actual events and the dates and persons connected to them, but in excepting the possibility of miraculous as well as solely mechanical agency. The discrepancies between these kinds of history are often therefore differences of interpretation, that is, of offering different explanations – mechanical or miraculous – for the forces that underlay specific events. Since the fundamental assumptions about the universe upon which mechanical (and 'colonial') historiography depends preclude the possibility of miraculous agency, if we are to read the stories in *Afzal al-karāmāt* in the manner in which the sepoys understood them, we must adopt a phenomenological approach to the text by setting aside our own assumptions about the historically possible. In this way, we can read *Afzal al-karāmāt* as an ethnohistory of the religious world of the Hyderabad Contingent. Concerned as it was with events within the reach of living memory, the text provides a picture of sepoy life which no amount of English-language material can replace, shaped as such British sources inevitably were by colonial ways of knowing.[42] For the basic structure of the main part of the text consists of a series of stories presented as being told by different sepoy followers of Afzal Shāh, in the manner of 'so-and-such, who served in the 5th risala of the Contingent, said so-and-such'. The book is in many senses the lost history of Jack Sepoy and the *faqīrs*.

One of the first episodes recounted in this part of *Afzal al-karāmāt* describes how Muhammad Khān, one of the sepoys of the Contingent, became a devotee of Afzal Shāh.[43] Muhammad Khān had been seeking a spiritual guide for a long time and, in this state, had turned towards the poetry of Hāfiz of Shiraz. When he was stationed with his regiment (*risāla*) at Hanamkonda, a fellow sepoy heard him reciting a verse of Hāfiz and remarked that he should go to meet the '*qāzī* of Qazipeth', who was an expert interpreter of the poet. And so the soldier went to visit Afzal Shāh and began to study with him the poetry of Hāfiz.[44] Here we should bear in mind that Indo-Muslim reading practices traditionally encouraged closely guided textual scrutiny as the means of uncovering the multiple layers of meaning 'hidden' in such verse: reading was a social – and as such a binding – act. Such was Muhammad Khān's enthusiasm for his new teacher that he began to spread word of him among his fellow soldiers at the great Bolarum barracks, and *Afzal al-karāmāt* recounts how Muhammad Khān later brought his friend Nāmdār Khān to visit the *faqīr* at Qazipeth. But as Muhammad Khān continued to visit his guide, he began to neglect both his family and soldierly duties in the cantonment, so much so that Afzal Shāh forbade him to come to seek him any more. Clearly, an out-of-work sepoy was not the kind of client that the *faqīr* had in mind. Ignoring this advice, the soldier left his work and family behind entirely and wandered off into the surrounding hills. After much outpouring of grief, in the end Muhammad Khān's brother Shams al-dīn Khān was sent by the family to ask Afzal Shāh to summon him back. Unfortunately, the family thought that Muhammad Khān's erratic behaviour was the result of black magic, and, as a result, when Shams al-dīn Khān came before Afzal Shāh to demand his brother's return he was less than respectful. To this, the *faqīr* calmly responded by telling Shams al-dīn to go and look down the step-well beside his house. On doing this, he too was thrown into mad ecstasy, tearing off his clothes and running to the hills. Eventually Shams al-dīn came down from the hills, and Afzal Shāh presented him back to his family. But with such a response to an insult, it was clear to all and sundry that no one should trifle with this *faqīr*. The whole barrack would surely have listened to a tale like this when it concerned one of their own like Muhammad Khān.

Afzal Shāh's was by no means the only step-well with mysterious and military associations in this context. Even in the more Anglo-Saxon environment of the Secunderabad cantonment, there lay a step-well said to be haunted by the ghost of Lieutenant John Moore, who was killed there with his horse in July 1807.[45] In such ways, British soldiers were also drawn into the supernatural realms of the sepoys. There was then a degree of common culture – or perhaps psychology – between the army life of



Figure 2 Cavalrymen of the Hyderabad Contingent, 1845.

Indian and British soldiers, exposed as they were to the same set of dangers. Just as white men went Doolally in India, so stories of Indian soldiers falling into states of ecstasy and distraction were by no means uncommon. Presumably they were part of a larger pattern of soldiers turning into 'ecstatics' (*majzūbs*) who represented the human fall-out of the harshness of barracks life and the experience of battle.[46] The traumatised soldier was not merely the detritus of war but had been common enough to be a specific social type in India, recognisable to his fellow warriors and serving a useful social purpose. But as India's military culture was

reformed under British control, the 'insane' sepoy became a matter of serious concern, his exploits and even existence regarded as a slight on the honour of the dazzling regiments with which the Company and later the Raj displayed their legitimacy in India during the nineteenth century. As a result, a sepoy asylum was established in Monghyr in Bihar as early as 1795.[47] By the late nineteenth century, such colonial concerns and their responses also reached Hyderabad, and, in Chapter 3, we discuss the case of another soldier-ecstatic among Afzal Shāh's followers, Banē Miyān of Aurangabad, whose mad and naked unpredictability earned him a large following among the next generation of Hyderabadi sepoys and the ire of their officers.

Such soldier-ecstatics also existed in Qazipeth among the soldiers who continued to make up the core following of Afzal Shāh's son and successor, Sarwar Biyābānī (d. 1331/1912).[48] A later sepoy in the Contingent called Mahmūd Khān (d. *c.* 1935) is said to have come to Afzal Shāh's shrine when his marriage failed and to have then settled there to live as a holy fool or *majzūb*. Like Banē Miyān, who received his nickname from Afzal Shāh, Mahmūd Khān was given the nickname Lālā Miyān by Afzal Shāh's heir Sarwar Biyābānī and became a regular resident of the shrine, where he would beat a long set of the tongs (known locally as *chhutā*) associated with certain *faqīrs* in time to the songs of the *qawwāls* who performed there.[49] It is said that during the First World War when Hyderabad's soldiers were sent into battle overseas they called upon Afzal Shāh to help them with the cry *al-madad yā Afzal Biyābānī* ('Help, O Afzal Biyābānī'). Amid the madness of battle it was instead the crazy Lālā Miyān who dared to appear beside them and stand protecting the soldiers until the gunfire subsided.[50]

Another story about Afzal Shāh's followers from the Hanamkonda barracks describes how the cavalryman Mīrzā Zulfan Bēg would come every day to meet the *faqīr* after completing his work in the cantonment.[51] Such was his devotion to Afzal Shāh that, like Mahmūd Khān, he too began to neglect his duties and so got into trouble with his British officers. But, in the end, the dispute was resolved, and the Mīrzā remained a devotee of Afzal Shāh until the *faqīr*'s death. Indeed, when Afzal Shāh died, the cavalryman even sold his horses to raise the funds for a domed mausoleum to cover his grave; the construction costs amounted to some 1,200 rupees.[52] In this way, Mīrzā Zulfan's act reflected wider patterns in British India in which military wages were channelled into the construction of religious institutions. It also, of course, reflected the private realm of the emotional life of an Indian cavalryman, whose grief at the death of his *faqīr* patron was such that he was willing to sell his horses – his livelihood – to construct a fitting place of burial.[53] (It is worth noting

here that cavalrymen or 'sowars' (*sawār*, 'rider') in British service such as Mīrzā Zulfan Bēg were expected to buy their own horses, which were often very costly as well as a source of pride.) The mausoleum was not built within the cantonment at Hanamkonda where Afzal Shāh had kept office but in Qazipeth, so making use of the *faqīr*'s family property while also complying with British regulations discouraging the construction of non-Christian religious buildings within cantonments due to the threat of disease posed by Indian pilgrims.[54] There was also a transactional element to the sowar's deed, based not only in a transfer of cash but also of more symbolic capital. For in selling his horses, Mīrzā Zulfan's act not only transferred the equine capital of the Contingent to the circle of Afzal Shāh, it also transferred the prestige associated with a well-born cavalryman. This pattern of the esteemed discipleship of cavaliers was by no means new and was also seen in the military history of the Mughal and Ottoman empires.[55] In Chapter 1 we have already mentioned the 'leopard-skin clad' Shāh Palangpōsh and his assistance of the Mughal armies. The construction of his baroque shrine in Aurangabad was similarly funded by Muslim soldiers and indeed appears to have served (like many European monasteries of the Middle Ages) as a place of retirement for warriors in their dotage.[56] If the pattern was old, what was new was that this was an army under British command. While Mīrzā Zulfan had presumably bought the horses himself, in selling them he was channelling off what were otherwise the material and symbolic resources of the colonial army towards the cult of a new Muslim saint.

The importance of the Mīrzā's act in paying for the building that would enable the growth of a posthumous shrine cult did not go unnoticed, and later in *Afzal al-karāmāt* Mīrzā Zulfan Bēg was placed in a chapter devoted to Afzal Shāh's spiritual deputies (*khulafā*) and favoured followers. The sowar's horses were the price of both his master's commemoration in stone and his own commemoration in the more fragile textual material of *Afzal al-karāmāt*. The Mīrzā's reward was not only of literary but also of practical character. For elsewhere in *Afzal al-karāmāt* we read of a journey that the Mīrzā made to North India – at this time still very much the foreign land designated 'Hindustan' by the people of Hyderabad– during which he suffered an attack of paralysis that froze both his arm and leg.[57] While this was bad enough for anyone, for a cavalryman it was disastrous. Since none of the doctors and medicines brought to his aid could help him, the Mīrzā called out to Afzal Shāh at the other end of India, and the *faqīr* then came to him in a dream and supported him in walking to a step-well (probably a reference to the same *bāʾōlī* at Afzal Shāh's residence back in Qazipeth).[58] The *faqīr* then commanded the cavalryman to stand, and, to the latter's amazement, he

found that he could walk: his limbs and his livelihood were at once restored.

While such accounts of interventions far from home formed an established part of the repertoire of saintly tales, their existence among the sepoy followers of Afzal Shāh reflected the fact that perilous journeys on the country roads that connected the Contingent's stations formed a regular part of the soldier's life.[59] The sepoy was a travelling man, and, in the mid-nineteenth century, travel still spelled danger. During the first half of the century, the Nizam's dominions were served by very poor communications, and it was not until the middle term of the reforming prime minister Sir Sālār Jang I (d. 1300/1883) from the 1870s that new roads and eventually railways were constructed in Hyderabad.[60] During Afzal Shāh's lifetime, the only modern roads in the Nizam's territories were those linking Hyderabad to the Nizam's second city of Aurangabad, to the province of Berar (which was ceded to the British in 1853 to pay for the Contingent) and to two road junctions in British India to the north and west.[61] In reflection of these poor communications, Hyderabad State was dotted with the garrisons at which the regiments of the Contingent were consecutively posted, the larger of which developed into proper cantonment towns in which the soldiers' training grounds and barracks were accompanied by the neat bungalows and regimental churches of their British officers. The expansion of Hyderabad's road network in order to aid the swift deployment of troops as much as the movement of trade was one of the obsessions of the British Residents at Hyderabad in the nineteenth century. A few years after Afzal Shāh's death, Resident Colonel Cuthbert Davidson (1810–62) reported to Calcutta on road-building projects that included the route between the cantonments at Hingoli and Jalna which Afzal Shāh's followers regularly traversed, as well as on the construction of rest-houses for soldiers along other roads.[62] But such was the condition of the Deccan's roads during the *faqīr*'s actual lifetime that his sepoy followers regularly required his protection from weather, animals and bandits while crossing the countryside.[63] They were not alone in their demands: the celebrated Bengali sepoy autobiographer Sītā Rām recalled an occasion when he and his fellow sepoys were traversing a stretch of jungle near Dehra Dun when arrows were suddenly shot at them from the trees. 'Many of the sepoys', he noted, 'said it was the work of *jinns*, and magic.'[64] Indeed, such was the fear of cross-country travel that in his mid-nineteenth-century *Qanoon-e-Islam*, the Muslim *munshī* attached to the Madras Army, Jaʿfar Sharīf, devoted a chapter to the supernatural considerations that the traveller should undertake before setting out on any journey.[65] Most importantly, the traveller should

ensure that the invisible class of beings known as 'hidden men' (*mardān al-ghayb*) should not be positioned either to the front or the right of the traveller as he set off. Since their position depended on which day a journey was commenced, Jaʿfar included a set of nine directional tables. Depending on the day, a successful journey could also be ensured by the prophylactic consumption of certain foodstuffs: jaggery for a Thursday journey, dressed meat for a Friday, fish for a Saturday, and so on. Failing this, the traveller's friends might make him an armband (*bāzūband*) of silver coins and ribbon known as an *imām zamīnī* or 'imam's protection'.[66] Clearly, Afzal Shāh was not the only one providing travellers with a protection service for their journeys. But, he had cornered a rich share of the market, with his sepoy clients, whose risk-laden employment brought a regular demand for his services.

Another such travel episode concerns a follower who was a 'native officer' by the name of Nāmdār Khān, who one day came before Afzal Shāh to ask his permission to leave Hanamkonda with the soldiers under his command for a route-march to the Contingent station at Hingoli.[67] Afzal Shāh gave his permission only reluctantly, warning his follower of the dangers of the sun and rain (though he might well have also warned them of bandits, since Hingoli was also a notorious centre of Thugee: in 1833, Captain Sleeman apprehended a large number of Thugs there). On hearing this weather warning, the soldier merely scoffed, saying that as men of war he and his troopers had no care for such trifles. But, sure enough, on the road the rain began to pour down as it only can in southern India; the reader of *Afzal al-karāmāt* was expected to know how the perils of washed-out roads, flash floods and sudden illness threaten those foolish enough to travel in the monsoon. Nonetheless, through the *faqīr*'s help, Nāmdār Khān and his men were miraculously protected from the rain, not a drop of which fell within a yard of any of them. On seeing this, a travelling Brahmin, who was also caught in the storm, came to ask if he could join Nāmdār Khān's party, and, after being accepted among them, he too was saved.[68] As well as illustrating how Afzal Shāh's powers were directed towards the specific demands of the soldier's life, the episode also reveals the other side to sepoy life that is missed in the official narratives and private memoirs of the army in colonial India. For here we see the way in which religious authority became intertwined with the chain of military command: when instructed to relocate to the cantonment at Hingoli, Nāmdār Khān first came to ask the permission of the *faqīr* to do so. We should not necessarily see this as a conflict of interests or loyalties. On the contrary, the best interests of such religious patrons as Afzal Shāh lay in maintaining the prestigious and well-paid following that regular soldiers



Figure 3 Cavalry officer of the Hyderabad Contingent, 1846.

constituted. Besides, a *faqīr* who was known to regularly ruin the careers and livelihoods of his followers was scarcely likely to attract new recruits to his own service!

As the nineteenth century progressed, British military policy became increasingly sensitive – if often for the most pragmatic of reasons – towards the religious feeling of its soldiery. If occasionally vetted and monitored, the sepoys' religious leaders were nonetheless tolerated and even encouraged as a key part of their welfare and morale. Recognition of the danger of upsetting soldiers gradually found expression in official army policy, particularly after 1857, when officers were taught to respect and indeed promote what they regarded as the religious and cultural values of their men. Regiments were encouraged – and in many cases required – to

demonstrate symbols of their religious or caste identity, whether through dress, music or the accompaniment of religious figures on campaign.[69] Along with the new wealth that remittances to family villages brought into the countryside, the army in such ways acted as an important motor of social and religious change in India. In Nāmdār Khān's visit to Afzal Shāh before his departure on duty, we hear a faint echo of the day-to-day negotiations between the army as a tool of British interests and the social world to which its members ultimately belonged. Unless the stakes were sufficiently high, Afzal Shāh was unlikely to withhold his permission and incur the wrath of his followers' superiors and the anguish of the men themselves. And so, in Nāmdār Khān's visit we witness the kind of regular diplomatic performance through which the sepoy maintained the balance of bonds and loyalties – of *dīn* and *dunyā* – that characterised his existence as an Indian owing allegiance both to his Muslim *faqīr* and his Christian commander.

A similar story from *Afzal al-karāmāt* describes a journey from Qazipeth back to the cantonment at Hanamkonda through the nocturnal domain of the bandits and leopards that plagued the jungle-side roads of the region. Despite their fears, the sepoys returned safely to their barracks, their spirits buoyed by the strange sensation that there was someone watching over them.[70] In the mental world of the sepoy, most of whom were deliberately recruited from rural backgrounds rich in legends of the forest, the Indian countryside was still inhabited by a whole range of other dangers beyond those of animals and highwaymen.[71] Traces of these supernatural dangers may be detected in another eerie story concerning a night journey, in which a stranger joined the party of followers surrounding Afzal Shāh as he travelled through the countryside.[72] The outcome of the narrative, in which the stranger was ultimately unmasked as none other than the Devil, Shaytān himself, reflected a much wider tradition of travellers' tales, from the macabre stories told three centuries earlier in North India by the Indo-Afghan historian Ahmad Yādgār (*fl.* 980–4/1572–6) to the more recent variations on the American urban legend of the vanishing hitchhiker.[73] Regardless of how literally we are willing to take such accounts, the story serves as a vivid example of the kinds of tale that circulated among travelling soldiers of the period and so helped shape their actual experience of travel.

Another such story concerns a stranger who joined Nāmdār Khān on a journey back to Hanamkonda from the Hingoli cantonment. The story demonstrates the power of narrative to shape the experience of the world, for the stranger was not merely the anonymous nobody of the fragmented social world of modernity but a mysterious somebody whose anonymous presence was seen as pregnant with all kinds of meaning.[74] Nāmdār Khān

did not know who the stranger was, but, from his acquaintance with other travellers' tales, he was sure that the stranger must have been a supernatural man of mystery; an ordinary man would have introduced himself. Travellers were thus on the expectant lookout for the otherworldly. We might well compare this truck with the supernatural aid of the *faqīr* with the British Soldier's implicit declaration of faith in Providence alone that was extolled in Kipling's short story 'The Lost Legion', first published in the *Strand Magazine* in 1892. When a party of British soldiers got lost at night in Afghan enemy territory and were frightened even of the noise of their own horses, they took a stalwart breath and 'when nothing occurred, they said that the gusts of the rain had deadened the sound of the horses, and thanked Providence.'[75] Even in his moments of terror, the imperial soldier was represented as a sensibly Protestant Englishman, who would never be so foolish as to ask for the visible intervention of a miracle into his orderly Newtonian world.

Afzal al-karāmāt also records another episode concerning Nāmdār Khān, in which the sowar (who by the time he was telling the story would have been an elderly soldier looking back on his career) recounted to the author of *Afzal al-karāmāt* the following strange episode. Nāmdār Khān recalled the time when his troops were relocated from Hanamkonda to 'Marathwada' (probably a reference to the cantonment at Aurangabad in this district, which was second in size only to that of Bolarum). While they were stationed there, Nāmdār Khān and a group of his cavalrymen decided to ride into the surrounding forests, probably for the sheer pleasure of the gallop. Such excursions formed an important part of the life of the Indian cavalryman and were frequently accompanied by the coursing and pig-sticking beloved of their British officers. As well as providing an enjoyable pastime, such rural rides also provided an informal means of training to supplement the routine of drill. In the 1830s, in the early years of his long career in Hyderabad, the British soldier, political officer and novelist Philip Meadows Taylor (1808–76) was stationed in Aurangabad. Like Nāmdār Khān, in his own memoirs Meadows Taylor also looked back upon the 'jolly days of hunting and coursing' that he had spent with his British and Indian colleagues riding in the forests and hills around Aurangabad with the devil-may-care attitude of a man unafraid of his environment.[76] Yet, in so far as the plucky tenor of his memoirs relays a genuine picture of his inner life, Meadows Taylor's experience of these rides differed from that of Nāmdār Khān. Looking back at his excursions, Nāmdār Khān remembered the occasion on which his men lost their way in the wilderness; as time passed and the riders passed deeper and deeper into the forest, full of wild animals and other dangers, the peril of their position became increasingly apparent to him, especially since he

was evidently in charge. The account of his reaction in *Afzal al-karāmāt* demonstrates a sensibility quite different from the self-reliance of Meadows Taylor and his mechanical world of 'rational' and empirical agency, for, in his state of anxiety, Nāmdār Khān decided his best option to save his men was to call upon his *faqīr* protector, Afzal Shāh. To his immense relief, he then saw a vision (*rū'yā*) of his patron, who calmly spoke to him in comfort. As a result of the *faqīr*'s intervention, when the morning came, Nāmdār Khān was able to lead his men out of the jungle to safety.

What is interesting here is not so much the message of these riding stories than their medium, for given the importance of Christianity to many British soldiers in India it would be inaccurate to allow these stories to reinforce old images of the sober Englishman and the fretting sepoy. Instead, a comparison of the memoirs of Meadows Taylor and Nāmdār Khān tells us more about the public sphere into which they passed the recollections of their inner life and the ways in which that public sphere shaped their exposition and understanding of the self. From Meadows Taylor – a political officer whose judgements were expected to draw on the cool empiricism of Locke and Berkeley – we can expect nothing less than the sceptically level-headed memoirs he placed before the Victorian reading public. But the Urdu public sphere for which *Afzal al-karāmāt* was written and into which it mediated the private lives of the soldiers who contributed to it was very different from that of Victorian Britain. Though contested by the rationalist followers of Sayyid Ahmad Khān and the new schools of anti-miraculous Traditionists, this was a public sphere in which miracles had still not surrendered their credibility and respectability. The Islam of Afzal Shāh and his followers was not the Sufi 'mysticism' of individualist self-transformation constructed in Victorian and Edwardian England to fit with a fundamentally Newtonian vision of the physical world and its predictable laws of causality but instead part of a cosmology that maintained a central role for the irregular and despotic agency of the miracle. Like the feudal and aristocratic social landscape of Hyderabad outside the cantonments, this was a universe whose operating powers had not undergone the democratic and levelling revolution heralded by the scientists' laws of saintly universal jurisdiction, laws which not even God's friends could override. Ever since the Reformation, Protestant Britons had officially believed that miracles ceased in the Age of the Apostles. In 1913, when *Afzal al-karāmāt* was published, an educated and respectable Indian Muslim could still speak with public credibility about the existence of miracles. But, as Indian society changed as the twentieth century progressed, the public place of the miraculous that had enabled cavalry officers like Nāmdār Khān and lawyers like Muhyī

al-dīn to put their strange tales in print would rapidly be surrendered to a new scientific consensus that newer forms of Islam could compromise with and even embrace. The rules of the Muslim universe were changing; but in the middle years of the nineteenth century, when these tales of Afzal Shāh were first told, these transformations were yet to take shape and would not reach the sepoys of Hyderabad for a long time to come.

Another tale of perilous travels concerned Muhammad Razā Khān, a native sergeant or *jamaʿdār* in the Contingent who was originally from the *qasba* town of Bareilly in North India and, judging by his name and hometown, probably a Pathan.[77] One day, while on duty, Muhammad Razā was passing near Qazipeth when he came before a tiger, a tigress and their cub, who were proudly blocking the path in front of him.[78] The sergeant was not alone, and with him were five other mounted cavalrymen and a camel-rider.[79] But even these numbers were scarcely a match for a family of tigers. Indeed, it seems that it was not only for the lives of his men that Muhammad Razā was concerned; the primary danger lay to the animals they were riding, which, even if they could be restrained from bolting in fear, could be easily mauled and so lost to useful service. Muhammad Razā was concerned not least for his own horse, which we are told had been valued at some 3,000 rupees. So, when he saw the tigers, Muhammad Razā immediately stopped his party and, perhaps already familiar with the *faqīrs*' protocol from barrack-hall tales of Afzal Shāh's powers, called on the *faqīr* to come to his aid. No sooner had he done this than the tiger raised himself from the path and walked away into the jungle, with his mate and cub trailing behind him. Formulaic as it may be, here we have a tale of the Pathan soldier that presents an alternative image to that of the fearless Pathan 'warrior race' that filled British military historiography from the same period.[80]

Such was its centrality to the sepoy's itinerant life that travel also formed the background to a number of other accounts of Afzal Shāh's followers. Within the cultic contexts of *Afzal al-karāmāt*, several of these stories served to demonstrate Afzal Shāh's ability to know of his followers' deeds and movements wherever they were. The corollary of the *faqīr*'s ability to rescue his protégés was that he always knew where they were, and moreover what they were up to. Supernatural power also therefore had a moral dimension. On one occasion, Nāmdār Khān teased his master, asking whether he could call on him even if he were as far away as Hindustan. In reply, the *faqīr* described to Nāmdār Khān his deeds on a past journey to North India during which Afzal Shāh was watching over (or perhaps simply watching) him.[81] In a similar story, a native commander-of-horse called Zābit Khān recounted how he had a dream

while he was away in Bengal in which he was instructed by the Prophet's son-in-law ʿAlī to become a disciple of Afzal Shāh.[82]

While there was clearly a hagiographical strategy in operation here in issuing an advertisement for the *faqīr*'s cult, we should not miss the historical dimension of this and the other accounts discussed above in pointing to the military network through which Afzal Shāh's cult was disseminated. As we see in the many stories relating to the movement of Afzal Shāh's soldierly followers around the cantonment towns of Hyderabad State, for the most part this process of cultic circulation was limited by the military geography that was the territorial remit of the Contingent in the Nizam's dominions. In this sense, Afzal Shāh's association with the mobile social group that his sepoy followers constituted enabled his reputation to spread beyond the provincial confines of Qazipeth to Hyderabad (via its neighbouring cantonment at Bolarum) and thence onto such other cantonment towns as Aurangabad and Hingoli in the north-west of the Nizam's State. But the same cycle of military circulation also constrained the spread of his fame. Occasionally, as we see in Chapter 3 on the career of Afzal Shāh's follower Banē Miyān, the army's role in spreading Afzal Shāh's fame was consolidated through the creation of new subsidiary cults capable of generating constituencies of followers in their new localities which could then be linked back to the Biyābānī family at Qazipeth by the foundation of pilgrimage networks mirroring the original movement of Hyderabad's sepoys. Attempts to link Qazipeth into pre-existing patterns of pilgrimage also offered a means to break free of the constraints of the Contingent. In a story of a group of *faqīrs* who came to visit Qazipeth from the town of Nagore on the Coromandel coast of the Madras Presidency we thus hear traces of Afzal Shāh's home beginning to enter pilgrimage networks beyond the Nizam's State and its cantonments.[83] These pilgrims were probably residents of the shrine of ʿAbd al-Qādir Shāh al-Hamīd Chishtī at Nagore.[84] Since *Afzal al-karāmāt* makes no claim that they had travelled solely to visit Afzal Shāh (which in any case seems unlikely in this period), it seems probable that they were passing through Qazipeth on their way to the great Chishtī pilgrimage centres in the north, at Delhi and Ajmer. Such connections would have been further boosted in the decades after Afzal Shāh's death when, by virtue of the military presence of the neighbouring cantonment at Hanamkonda, the British-sponsored Nizam's State Railway reached Qazipeth in the late 1880s. Later track construction in the 1920s would link Qazipeth directly to Nagpur and other major centres in the north, such that any journey between Hyderabad and British north India had necessarily to pass through Qazipeth.[85] Since the railway tracks passed within just a few yards of the mausoleum built by Afzal Shāh's sepoy

followers, and the station itself lay only a mile away, a short visit to the shrine could be easily appended to any pilgrimage or other journey between Hyderabad and north India. In this way, the railway helped connect Qazipeth to wider Muslim pilgrimage networks, so forming a means by which the cult of the *faqīr* could outgrow its original military constituency and the limitations, social and geographical, that this implied.[86] But in Afzal Shāh's own lifetime, his following was still constrained by the social world of the Contingent and its military network of cantonment towns.

Nonetheless, as supporters of a new cult, soldiers were perhaps the most reliable and wide-ranging of all India's itinerant groups during this period.[87] As we see in the stories connecting Afzal Shāh to soldiers visiting Bengal and Hindustan (from where many of them originated), the movement of sepoys could in a limited way also spread Afzal Shāh's fame beyond the frontiers of Hyderabad. Again though, as within the Nizam's State, his cult was usually also constrained to military circles beyond it. Still, this process of circulation seems to have met with some degree of success, for we also hear of 'Hindustanis' (that is, North Indians) presenting themselves to the *faqīr* at Qazipeth. In some cases, these Hindustanis were sepoys brought to the Hanamkonda cantonment through their work. One such Hindustani whom Afzal Shāh met while visiting the regiment at Hanamkonda asked him to initiate his wife, who had remained in his home village hundreds of miles to the north.[88] The story's miraculous denouement occurred after Afzal Shāh briefly disappeared behind a cabin in the barracks yard. For when the soldier's wife was later reunited with her husband, she described how one day one of the 'great ones' (*bozorg*) had suddenly appeared before her, explaining that since he was the spiritual master of her husband he was now her master as well. When the soldier and his wife calculated the date of this occurrence, they discovered it was the very day on which Afzal Shāh had sneaked behind the cabin at Hanamkonda. As well as testifying to the spread of the *faqīr*'s cult among North Indian soldiers, the story also illustrates the way in which the *faqīr*'s army network overlapped with sepoy kinship networks to further disseminate the pledges of allegiance on which his fellowship depended. For, just as soldiers heard of Afzal Shāh's greatness through the stories that spread round the cantonments through the circulation of the soldiers themselves, the soldiers in turn ensured the protection of their families through initiating their wives and children as Afzal Shāh's protégés.[89] It is not too facile to consider the cult as a parallel to the insurance policies that typify certain modern organisations (including the British Army), in which misfortunes affecting the employee's family are covered by dint of the (typically male) employee's affiliation. The

faqīr, then, was not only the protector of the army camp but of the camp-followers as well. Here was a sure way of boosting his fellowship, in terms of numbers if not necessarily of lucrative devotees such as the salaried sepoys themselves. In this way, from the barrack halls of Hyderabad's cantonment towns, the fellowship of Afzal Shāh gradually entered the domestic sphere of the soldiers' womenfolk, and from there spread more widely through the domestic networks of kith and kin responsible for the maintenance of female and family life in India.

These modes of dissemination were highly successful and were not without their discontents as a result. For, when Afzal Shāh's local non-sepoy follower Mawlwī Muhammad Shāh ʿAlī came to visit him one day at Qazipeth he was unable to see him due to the crowd of North Indians and other 'foreigners' (*ghayr-mulkīs*) that had gathered before Afzal Shāh's house (possibly a reference to the families of the Punjabi and Bengali sepoys who were so common in the Contingent).[90] Here we can detect an echo of the tension between attending to a following rooted in the locality of Qazipeth and addressing the needs of a more mobile congregation of soldiers and camp-followers who came, spent and went while leaving locals at the sidelines. Afzal Shāh's response to the dissatisfaction of this old customer forced to queue with the newcomers outside his supernatural dispensary was to bypass the crowds by visiting Mawlwī Muhammad in a dream. By jumping the queue to reach his follower through the medium of dreaming, the supernatural techniques of the *faqīr* could be employed to tackle the banal deficiencies of communication that are the Achilles' heel of so many service industries. For all its simplicity, the dream visitation was a brilliant business solution – taking an angry customer out of the public queue while at the same time keeping him happy through the special attention of a vicarious home visit.

In spite of the mundane roots of the miraculous that are revealed in this account, we should not overlook the emotional register that the story entered through the royal road to the inner life that dreams provide. In this way, the several accounts of sepoy dreams recorded in *Afzal al-karāmāt* provide a unique insight into the interior life of the subaltern.[91] In one such account we read how Afzal Shāh's follower Nāmdār Khān once dreamt of the *faqīr* calling out to him as he lay sleeping in his barrack at Hanamkonda.[92] That was it – with simplicity itself, the dream captured the sense of belonging, protection and emotional comfort that the devotional idiom of a saintly Islam could offer to sepoys stationed hundreds of miles from friends and family. A similar account relates to a dream of Afzal Shāh's brother-in-law, Mīr Turāb ʿAlī, who, in reflection of the social status of many of the *faqīr*'s followers, worked for the colonial administrators of the Hanamkonda cantonment. In his dream, Mīr Turāb ʿAlī saw

himself embarking on a journey with his wife and visiting a series of hills and mansions along the way.[93] Perplexed by these stark symbols, the Mīr went to consult with a Muslim scholar (*ʿālim*) living in Hanamkonda called Mawlwī ʿAbd Allāh, who may well have been a rival of Afzal Shāh for the sepoys' attentions. We should not forget that with his juridical and Qurʿānic training, the *faqīr* Afzal Shāh was no less a member of the *ʿulamā* than Mawlwī ʿAbd Allāh. Still, the latter's Islamic learning evidently included the science of dream interpretation (*taʿbīr*), which regarded dreams as revealing the relationship between man, the universe and its creator. On hearing the Mīr relate his dream, Mawlwī ʿAbd Allāh declared it to be a vision of paradise, which was now assured to both Mīr Turāb ʿAlī and his wife through Afzal Shāh's intercession with God on his behalf.

In such ways, the meaning of dreams played an important element in the daily life of the military cantonment. Like a quotidian sibling of the miracle, the dream was evidence of God's presence in the world; and in shaping human behaviour it also possessed a form of agency that is no less difficult for modern historiography to deal with than its miraculous sibling. Such disenchanted notions of causality were already present in Hyderabad during Afzal Shāh's lifetime through the presence of the state's sceptical British overlords. Richard Temple, the Resident at Hyderabad from 1867 to 1868, had a good many dealings with the soldiers of the Bolarum Cantonment who formed Afzal Shāh's followers. But it was an encounter with the Nizam, Afzal al-Dawla, that prompted him to record in his diary his attitude towards the customs of dream interpretation that he saw as a league of credulity through which untrustworthy *faqīrs* exerted influence over those in their thrall. Unlike in *Afzal al-karāmāt*, the dream was here not so much a means of divine engagement with the world of men as a shopfront for priestly tricksters. What is more, the Nizam's dreams were connected in Temple's own imagination with the perpetual threat of *faqīrs* plotting insurrection. For Resident Temple wrote that 'all these dreams had some reference to the English: all of which, of course, was just a sign that the *fakírs* had been talking some superstitious nonsense to His Highness.'[94] From sepoy to Nizam, the *faqīrs* of Hyderabad had their own chain of command that could outstrip even the reach of the Resident.

Other miracle accounts in *Afzal al-karāmāt* provide similarly rare access to the imaginative life of the sepoys. Like many of his contemporaries, Afzal Shāh regularly convened musical gatherings or *mahfil-e-samāʿ*. We are told that he convened such gatherings every week, which the soldiers of the *risāla* at Hanamkonda would always attend. Through the medium of music and entertainment, Islam provided a welcome alternative to the boredom of the barracks, albeit an Islam in which music and festivity

was encouraged instead of suppressed.[95] A particularly charming account of such a gathering described an occasion when a soldier said he had heard that in Paradise the pious will be served fish kebabs.[96] On hearing this, his fellow sepoy Nāmdār Khān asked Afzal Shāh what this heavenly fish tasted like. In response, the *faqīr* declared he would show them and immediately conjured a fish kebab out of nowhere, declaring it to be the very one that the Muslims would enjoy in Paradise. He then passed it to his favoured devotee, Nāmdār Khān, who later told the author of *Afzal al-karāmāt* that words could not express how delicious it tasted. The imagery of this episode relied on a wider association between fish and Paradise, which was also manifested in the pools of blessed fish at Muslim shrines in the Deccan and elsewhere in Islamic Asia.[97] The story clearly suggests that in the religious world of the sepoy, Paradise was not envisaged as a state of abstract communion with God but as a place to enjoy the good life – represented here by a kebab of spicy fish. Rather than the mystical communion of souls with the Divine, these Muslim soldiers simply sought the promise of a perceptible payment for their life of labour. The reward of their initiation at the hands of the *faqīr* was a meal on the celestial table at the end of life's long day.

Elsewhere, the *faqīr*'s biography describes a devotee attending another of Afzal Shāh's weekly musical gatherings and, according to the usual custom, being fed there. But, rather than accept the food, the soldier sat silently sulking, thinking how he would have preferred some *achār* pickle to spice up what was on offer.[98] The *faqīr* read the devotee's thoughts and unexpectedly predicted that someone was about to arrive with a whole jar of pickles. They shortly arrived, serving the purpose of presenting Afzal Shāh as capable of fulfilling any wish. The vivid description of a devotee arriving at the *faqīr*'s party bearing a large earthenware jar of pickles on his head provides a glimpse into the culinary culture in which barracks Islam also participated, answering the demands of off-duty sepoys keen for a change from the bland barracks diet of lentils and rice. The promise of music and tasty food at the *faqīr*'s weekly gatherings thus suggests the patterns of sociability that any religious movement has to adopt in order to flourish, in this case the provision of an indigenous alternative to the atmosphere of the barracks which from the 1830s was becoming increasingly strait-laced and sober through the combined influence of evangelical chaplains and the medical ideology of hygienic good order. How much more appealing – and historically convincing – is this image of the *faqīr* as an eastern Trimalchio than that of the moralising book groups imagined by the Orientalists and Muslim reformists whose picture of 'Sufism' we have inherited?

In reflection of wider Islamic traditions of hospitality and the social bonds of sharing bread and salt, food culture also played other roles in the *faqīr*'s circle. Elsewhere in *Afzal al-karāmāt*, we read of a wealthy merchant called Muhyī al-dīn ʿAlī who invited a large group of people to eat at Afzal Shāh's house.[99] While not explicitly stated, it seems likely that this act formed the fulfilment of a vow or *nazar*, so linking the living holy man to the transactional process of gift-giving so central to the cultural logic of a saintly Islam.[100] But when Muhyī al-dīn saw how many people arrived, he began to panic and confessed to Afzal Shāh his fear that (in that most humiliating of Islamic *faux pas*) he had not provided enough food for the guests. The *faqīr* reassured him and gave him his *rūmāl* scarf with which to cover the cauldron where the food was cooking. After he did this, Muhyī al-dīn found that there was food in plenty after all; indeed, when he later removed the scarf fully he saw that only a quarter of the pudding he had cooked was gone. Even as the *faqīr* became the unfailing host that Muhyī al-dīn could never be, his miracles had to mirror the social codes of those his supernatural hospitality sought to impress. The miracle, as ever, reflected the milieu.

We gain some sense of the purpose of such offerings as Muhyī al-dīn's cauldron of *halwā* in several other episodes in *Afzal al-karāmāt* that relate to Afzal Shāh's intervention in cases of illness and infertility, those perennial causes of misery that nourish saint cults the world over. Several stories describe Afzal Shāh bestowing children on the barren, and, while this was undoubtedly a request brought to him from followers of all classes, in reflection of the social mores and pretensions of the literate class to which *Afzal al-karāmāt* was partly directed, the figures who are described as coming before Afzal Shāh with this request were all described as landowning notables rather than as sepoys, though the possibility remains that some of these figures were retired sepoys given land for their services. Given the prominence of some of the Hyderabadi families to which the text referred, the stories' presence also reflects the historiographical intentions of its author in pointing towards public figures whom the reader might expect would reject the stories if they were patently untrue. At the same time, the stories also point to the way in which the world was understood to operate, postulating the *faqīr*'s deliberate agency behind conception and childbirth in place of a purely mechanical model of childbirth. One such account concerned an important local government official, Sayyid Muhyī al-dīn Bādshāh, the *taʿluqdār* of Warangal, whose barren wife presented herself before Afzal Shāh and afterwards bore three sons, including the prominent figure in Hyderabadi politics, Nawwāb Ahmad Jang Bahādur.[101] In two similar cases of bestowing children on the barren, Afzal Shāh demanded that in return for his grace

and favour the children be named according to his wishes: the son granted to one woman was named Ghulām Husayn, while the daughter of another was named Afzal Bī in honour of the *faqīr* himself.[102] Once again, such naming customs reflect the expansion of the cult beyond the circles of the barracks into the local landholding class and beyond the male circles of the soldier into the family life of his womenfolk. Many of the sepoys similarly brought their entire families to be initiated and blessed by Afzal Shāh, who often gave their children names as well.[103] Such accounts further unravel the transactional logic of the vow-gift or *nazar*, for a child so named by a holy man was implicitly dedicated to him for the whole course of the life that they owed him.[104] If such children followed their fathers into the army, as so many typically did, with the cross-generational recruitment patterns of the colonial army and its predecessors, then the implication of this was obvious: the soldier's ties to his *faqīr* were no less primordial than those to his – and his forefathers' – regiments.

Besides exerting influence over the naming of children, the importance of the *nazar* is also seen in the story of the wife of a follower from Hyderabad, who bore two daughters as a result of Afzal Shāh's blessing and whose daughters went on to marry prominent Hyderabadi notables in accordance with the *faqīr*'s prediction, all this mediated through an amulet (*taʿwīz*) that the *faqīr* had given to the mother.[105] Despite Afzal Shāh's humble protestations, the final outcome of the miracle was that the father built a pukka house for the *faqīr*'s meetings. Away from the colonial territory of the barracks, it was down to a local class of Muslim elites to provide the amenities for the sepoys' rest and relaxation at the musical gatherings of the *faqīr* of Qazipeth. In such ways, it was the transactional logic of the vow that formed the economic foundation of both barracks Islam and the wider traditions of devotional Islam to which it was affiliated, in which the presentation of *nazar* offerings in cash or kind did not reflect badly on their *faqīr* recipients but only on the parsimonious donor whose offering was considered inadequate. With vows and offerings so central to India's religious marketplace, the gratitude of soldiers saved from danger and of feudal elites provided with heirs paid tremendous dividends in this economy of the miraculous.[106] But, rather than rely for support on the impulsive and unpredictable gratitude of the landed elite, Afzal Shāh owed his success to the fact that he could count instead on the material support of his many salaried followers in the Contingent. For, however neglected the colonial soldier is in the standard histories of religious change in India, with his regular wages he was one of the most efficient, reliable and altogether important religious patrons of the modern era.

The dangers of travel and the desire for entertainment and children were by no means the only concerns of those who sought the help of Afzal Shāh. Another group of sepoy recollections in *Afzal al-karāmāt* concerns fears of being dismissed (*bar-tarafī*) from service. Like sepoys all over India, the principal misdemeanour of which Afzal Shāh's followers were guilty was being away from their regiments without leave. The manifold responsibilities that the average sepoy bore – and the difficulties and slow speed of travel to home villages for marriage, birth and death ceremonies – meant that even during periods of official leave the Indian soldier often found himself returning to duty considerably late. Despite what was regarded in official quarters as the generosity of arrangements for compassionate and festive leave, such absenteeism remained a regular problem for all of the forces under British command in India.[107] As in the story of Mīrzā Zulfan Bēg, whom we have already seen in trouble with his superiors for spending too much time attending to Afzal Shāh, *Afzal al-karāmāt* presents several other accounts of sepoy concerns about being dismissed through absenteeism. In one of these cases, the text claims to record the personal reminiscences of another cavalryman, Mīr Rahmat ʿAlī, concerning an occasion on which he travelled from the main cantonment station of the Contingent at Bolarum to visit Afzal Shāh at Qazipeth.[108] The account does not mention how long the Mīr had been away from his regiment in Afzal Shāh's company, but whether conscious of the fact or not, he had clearly overstayed his leave. One day, the Mīr was wandering around the cantonment at Hanamkonda near to Afzal Shāh's home, when he met one of the English officers of his regiment, which in the meantime had been transferred there from Bolarum. Seeing the Mīr, the 'Englishman' or *angrēz* came up to him and demanded to know how long he was on leave. When the Mīr replied that he didn't know how many days he had left, the *angrēz* officer asked to see his leave certificate, which, it seems, the Mīr was unable to read. On seeing the certificate, the *angrēz* declared that it was written there that the Mīr's leave had finished that very day and so he should report back to duty in Bolarum by the following morning or else be permanently dismissed from duty. There seems to have been an element of mischief, or even plain exasperation, in the Englishman's officiousness, for, travelling by the main route via Hyderabad, at around ninety miles from Hanamkonda, the station at Bolarum was at least three days' journey. Distraught at hearing this, rather than launching himself upon the road and flogging his horse all the way to Bolarum (as we might expect Meadows Taylor would have done were he recounting a tale of his youth), the Mīr instead rushed to ask the help of Afzal Shāh. The *faqīr* calmly reassured him that as long as he trusted in God all would be well – and then proceeded to do nothing as the

remaining hours of the day slipped away. Then, as night fell, Afzal Shāh took the cavalryman by the hand and led him to the outskirts of Qazipeth, where there stood an old shack beside the road. Leading the Mīr inside, Afzal Shāh then closed the eyes of his follower and began an incantation of prayers that he promised would send the Mīr to Bolarum cantonment.[109] When the cavalryman opened his eyes, he found to his amazement that, without knowing how, he had been transported to his station at Bolarum. Exhausted, he then fell asleep in his dormitory, only to be woken hours later by the sound of the drumming *nawbat* summoning the cavalry for their morning parade. Hearing this, he got up and reported present for duty.

On a different occasion, another cavalryman called Muhammad ʿAlī Bēg journeyed to visit Afzal Shāh while on leave and likewise overstayed.[110] When he eventually reported back on duty at Bolarum, the Englishman in command informed him that he was to be discharged for his misdemeanour. When news of this spread, all of Muhammad ʿAlī's friends and brothers gathered to protest. Just when they had formed a crowd, a senior British officer walked by and demanded to know the cause of the disturbance. The crowd remonstrated with him, claiming it was unfair to discharge a native officer merely on the grounds of returning late from leave (which they clearly considered a trifling offence). In response, the officer instructed Muhammad ʿAlī to present himself at his bungalow the following morning. When he did so, he was informed that his discharge had been quashed and that far from being dismissed his rank had instead been raised to the command of eight horses! All this, *Afzal al-karāmāt* informs us, came through the help of Afzal Shāh.

Although only one step up in the cavalry hierarchy, such promotions were an important advertisement for the versatility of *faqīr*'s powers. In 1843, a horseman in the Contingent earned 40 rupees per month as compared with 60 rupees for a duffadar (dafʿdār), 200 rupees for a jamedar (jamaʿdār) and a princely 500 for the sole risaldar (*risāladār*) who was the chief native officer of the Contingent's cavalry regiments.[111] It is therefore clear that in such cases the *faqīr*'s miracles also possessed a financial value. Unlike the story of the miraculous teleportation of Mīr Rahmat ʿAlī, as with many of the other wonders associated with Afzal Shāh, what is interesting about this story is the miracle's subtlety, positing a hidden hand underlying even the conscious agency of the British officer who had quashed Muhammad ʿAlī's discharge. In part, this suggests that the genre of miraculous historiography to which *Afzal al-karāmāt* belongs operates partly through a process of the interpretation of events, positing additional or hidden forms of agency behind the outward and superficial order of events. Thus, while anyone can describe what happened, only the learned – those initiated into the secrets of the *faqīrs*' powers – can explain

why and how. In this way, we see how miraculous versions of history construct interpretations of events on the basis of underlying assumptions about the presence of multiple super-physical agencies in the world. At the same time, we also see in such accounts a process of the deliberate reversal of colonial agency. By the mere act of capping the story with the claim of the *faqīr* as an *éminence grise* manipulating events behind the scenes, it turns a tale of a lucky escape from dismissal into an outright subversion of colonial power. Viewed in the context in which it was written, *Afzal al-karāmāt* was in this sense producing a counter-history of the colonial encounter that we might regard as a strategy of writing *against* history.

Such subversive restatements of the location and exercise of power crop up elsewhere in *Afzal al-karāmāt*. In one case, Afzal Shāh predicted the future deployment to Ishaqpattan of the regiment in which Nāmdār Khān was serving. While the soldier dismissed the prediction when he first heard it, three months later the *faqīr*'s words came true. Here again, in the background to the account, is the suggestion that Afzal Shāh knew in advance of the plans of the Contingent's officers and perhaps even somehow provoked them. It would probably be wrong to read such stories through an overtly nationalistic lens as examples of outright 'resistance', for Indo-Muslim tradition had for centuries celebrated saintly influence and foreknowledge of the fortunes of armies commanded by each of the many ethnic groups who passed through India. As much as they map sentiments of resistance, such local Urdu histories as *Afzal al-karāmāt* point towards the absorption of the British into a historical imagination that differed greatly from their own. Perhaps the ability to recount history from such different perspectives on the world – and so to forcibly initiate the Indianisation of the British – did constitute a kind of resistance, if not to the outward forms of colonial power represented by the army, then to the ways of knowing and recounting the world that were concomitant with colonial modernity. In so far as such works as *Afzal al-karāmāt* did demonstrate a loss of British control, it was by making them lose control of the plot of history.

A 'saturnalia of fiends': the Bolarum Rebellion of 1855

Despite the guiding hand of colonial policy over the formation of the Hyderabad Contingent, the British were never able to monopolise nor even fully regulate the exercise of violence in Hyderabad. For much of the first half of the nineteenth century the Contingent's regiments were regularly involved in skirmishes and outright battles with groups of wandering Afghan and Arab soldiers, hangovers from an older Indian military

culture of freebooting 'mercenary' troops into which many of the early exploits of the British should also be placed.[112] On other occasions, the sepoys' violence was turned on their own masters, for sepoy uprisings were a widespread phenomenon in the decades leading up to the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857. While the Contingent was predominantly loyal during the Rebellion, part of it nonetheless mutinied in Aurangabad in support of the uprisings in North India. This regimental uprising had its roots in several other rebellions over the previous decades in Hyderabad.[113] The most important of these was the Bolarum 'mutiny' of 1855 in which many of the followers of Afzal Shāh were involved. As well as demonstrating further the range of dangers in which a *faqīr* could intercede, the Bolarum uprising also provides material for reassessing the complex contribution of sepoy religion to the military rebellions that were so central a feature of the expansion of colonial rule in India.

The rebellion of Contingent sepoys at the Bolarum cantonment outside Hyderabad in 1855 is probably the most important historical episode to feature in Afzal Shāh's biography. Looking back a little over half a century from its point of completion around 1913, *Afzal al-karāmāt* began its account of the rebellion by explaining that these events occurred in the days when the cantonment at Bolarum was in the charge of 'Mister Mackenzie'.[114] Although it was the holy month of Muharram, Mackenzie announced that it was forbidden for any of the soldiers to go out into the streets and carry the stylised battle standards (*ʿalam*) with which the martyrdom of Hasan and Husayn at Karbala was ritually mourned and remembered. Despite the ban, a group of soldiers took an *ʿalam* and marched with it in front of Mackenzie's bungalow. Seeing this, Mackenzie took it to be a deliberate breach of his orders and so summoned the men before him and proceeded to insult them and break their drums. When news of this spread, the other sepoys stationed at Bolarum took Mackenzie's actions for an attack on Islam. As a result, about 300 sepoys armed themselves with sticks and swords and marched on Mackenzie's bungalow.[115] The building was built simply of poor-quality materials, and it didn't take long for the soldiers to break in, where they reached Mackenzie and beat him so hard that he collapsed. Although he had only passed out, it seemed to everyone present that the soldiers had killed him, and so his wife fled the bungalow in terror, eventually finding her way to the British Residency a few miles distant at Secunderabad. There she informed the Resident what had happened. On hearing of the events, the Resident commanded a regiment to set off for Bolarum from its guard post at the Residency, though since there were Muslims in the Residency's forces as well, it was decided that a regiment of British troops

should also be sent. As night fell, the British reinforcements crept slowly towards Bolarum to confront the rebels.

However, among the foot soldiers and cavalrymen of the regiment in revolt at Bolarum were many of Afzal Shāh's followers. Terrified at the advance of the British relief force, several of these men presented themselves before Afzal Shāh's close disciple, Mīrzā Zulfan Bēg (whom we have already encountered getting into trouble for visiting the *faqīr* every day). Standing before the Mīrzā, the sepoys explained that since he was the closest to Afzal Shāh, he should pray on their behalf for the *faqīr*'s help. Mīrzā Zulfan Bēg acceded to their wish and sank into a state of deep concentration, in which he saw Afzal Shāh coming towards him and assuring him of his help and explaining that he would tie a 'curtain' across the plain that stood between the two armies. When the Mīrzā came to his senses he told the soldiers the good news that Afzal Shāh would save them from danger. Just at that moment, the British troops, which were by now almost facing them, began to turn away and flee the battlefield: they had seen a huge force of thousands of Muslims charging to attack them. But there were no thousands of Muslim, only a cowed regiment of sepoys praying to a *faqīr* for help: what the British saw according to the account given in *Afzal al-karāmāt* was an illusion caused by the *faqīr*'s magical 'curtain'. Several of Afzal Shāh's followers claimed that at this moment they saw the *faqīr* himself waving a sword in defiance right in the garden of Mackenzie's bungalow, so directing his army of illusory warriors. A few days later, when matters had calmed down, Mīrzā Zulfan Bēg went to visit Afzal Shāh at Qazipeth, a few days' travel from the scene of the events at Bolarum. Knowing what had happened, the *faqīr* simply said that the soldiers had received a great blessing. It was his coy way of acknowledging his role in the affair.

We are fortunate in possessing British documentation with which to compare this version of events related in *Afzal al-karāmāt*. The richest alternative documentation on these events is contained in an anonymous account of the 'mutiny' that was printed in Edinburgh in 1857 for private circulation.[116] While at sixty-two pages, the *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum in September 1855* provides a much fuller account of the events than that given in *Afzal al-karāmāt*, what is interesting is that right up to the miracle sequence that forms the denouement of the Urdu text it corroborates the Indian story at almost every point. The author of the *Narrative* seems to have been a British officer of the Contingent who did not wish to reveal his identity due to the criticism of Mackenzie's actions he hinted at. His *Narrative* begins by locating 'the late outbreak and attempt at murder' in the context of the rituals and processions that mark the first ten days of the month of Muharram, which formed so

important a part of the religious and festive life of the sepoy.[117] The text moves on to a laudatory description of the five regiments of the Nizam's Horse ('the finest irregular cavalry in India, with the exception of Jacob's Horse'[118]) which in 1854 had been reorganised as part of the formal foundation of the Hyderabad Contingent, the Northern Division of which was placed under the command of Brigadier Colin Mackenzie (1806–81). The reorganisation had not been without its discontents, particularly in so far as it infringed upon the rank of the native officer class whose commanding risaldars had wielded considerable authority under the old structure. Partly as a result of the discontent caused by the new structure of command, the former 5th *risāla* of the Nizam's Horse was disbanded on account of its unruliness. In its high-spirited way, the *Narrative* extolled considerable praise on the virtues of the five former regiments of horse, albeit admitting that the 3rd *risāla* of the Nizam's Horse was known to be of a 'general bad character for insolence and dissipation' and that a few years earlier some of its men had in fact murdered their risaldar and their British commander, Major Davies.[119]

Turning towards the events in question, the *Narrative* noted that the sepoys were usually granted a full ten days of leave during Muharram but that the issuing of this order was unaccountably delayed for three days by Mackenzie's brigade-major. A few days later still, apparently not realising the precise date in the Islamic calendar due to the brigade-major's mistake, Brigadier Mackenzie issued an order that 'no processions, music, or noise will be allowed, on any account whatever, from twelve o'clock on Saturday to twelve o'clock Sunday night'.[120] Having already heard the raucous sounds of celebration, Mackenzie's motive was apparently to preserve the quiet of Saturday and particularly of Sunday for the small Christian community of the cantonment. The crux of the matter was that Mackenzie's quiet sabbath also coincided with the main – the tenth (*ʿāshūrā*) – day of Muharram: he had in effect banned the festival's culmination. Mackenzie's orders were announced on the Tuesday, leaving tensions to build through the rest of the week as the *ʿāshūrā* holy day drew nearer. The responsibility for enforcing the order fell upon the Contingent's native officers, such as Shāh Mīrzā Bēg, who threatened to flog any sepoy who disobeyed. Nonetheless, suspicions began to rise that there was a religious dimension to the ban. Āghā Muhammad Khān – a Christian convert from Kabul who taught Persian to the British stationed at Bolarum and who often preached in the cavalry bazaar – was 'pushed and pelted' by some of the soldiers.[121] Their suspicions were not without foundation. Although it is not mentioned in the *Narrative*, Mackenzie had already gained a reputation for his religious zeal during his years as a hostage in Kabul in the 1840s and his subsequent participation in the first Anglo-Afghan war, earning himself

the ironical nickname among the lower ranks of the 'Moollah' (that is, the mulla) by which his Afghan captors had first referred to him.[122] As we discuss more fully in the next section, in a period in which the evangelical movement was making steady inroads into the army in India, Mackenzie's religious agenda was central to the rebellion and, as such, demonstrates one of the means by which colonial conceptions of 'true religion' were to influence changes in the religion of the Indian soldier.[123]

According to the *Narrative*, as the atmosphere steadily deteriorated in the days after the ban, the small British community began to gather at Mackenzie's bungalow, sheltering within while outside the battle cry of '*dīn, dīn* [the faith, the faith]!' began to rise. Here the *Narrative*'s description fits with the fanatical topoi of other mutiny narratives that would appear in subsequent years. As Lieutenant (later Colonel) Edward Vibart (1839–1923) wrote in his memoirs of the outbreak of the Sepoy Rebellion at Meerut in 1857, an officer's wife had recalled how, 'every minute things bore a blacker look, as the 38th Sepoys, whose muskets were piled on the ridge, began calling out, *Deen! Deen!* (religion! religion!)'.[124] Nonetheless, infractions of religious rights were a regular factor in sepoy revolts, and, like the older Arabic cry of both *faqīrs* and warriors *Yā hū* ('O He!') (which as 'yahoo' would enter English via *Gulliver's Travels* and the call that Californian cowboys picked up from their Hispanic predecessors, who had in turn learned it from Arab cavaliers in the Spanish plains), the war cry was real enough.[125] Curiously, Afzal Shāh's presence at the uprising as recounted in *Afzal al-karāmāt* also reflects the claim made by the Methodist missionary William Butler (and echoed by many other commentators) that during the Rebellion of 1857, *faqīrs* were widely employed 'as the medium of communication; and so they were so stationed that the orders transmitted, or the information desired, could be forwarded with a celerity and safety that was amazing'.[126] We can never ascertain whether the description given in *Afzal al-karāmāt* of Afzal Shāh's sword-waving to the sepoys from Mackenzie's bungalow records a trace of the *faqīr*'s role in this ad-hoc communication system, but it is a tantalising possibility.

Here too, though, the place of the *faqīrs* in the larger story of 1857 is more complex, and, if *faqīrs* were working as a 'medium of communication', it was not only on behalf of the rebels. By way of evidence we present an episode witnessed by no less a figure than Field-Marshal Roberts of Kandahar (1832–1914), erstwhile Commander-in-Chief in India (1885–93). In his celebrated memoir, 'Bobs' recorded how:

> Some excitement was caused on reaching camp by the appearance of a fakir seated under a tree close to where our tents were pitched [...] On our addressing him, the fakir pointed to a small wooden platter, making signs for us to examine it. The

platter had been quite recently used for mixing food in, and at first there seemed to be nothing unusual about it. On closer inspection, however, we discovered that a detachable square of wood had been let in at the bottom, on removing which a hollow became visible, and in it lay a small folded paper, that proved to be a note from General Havelock, written in the Greek character, containing the information that he was on his way to the relief of the Lucknow garrison, and begging any Commander into whose hands the communication might fall to push on as fast as possible to his assistance […][127]

While Roberts recollected (rightly or otherwise) that the *faqīr* in question was a Hindu, the larger point remains that the role of India's itinerant holy men in the rebellions of the nineteenth century was an ambiguous one. As with the relationship of India's *faqīrs* to the army more generally, between Roberts' story and the story of Afzal Shāh we see the complexity of the relationship between the colonial army and India's holy men, at times antagonistic, at other times cooperative.

While the *Narrative* makes no reference to any specific religious figure as a ringleader at Bolarum, a few years later when the rebellion of 1857 led to an attempt to storm the Residency in Hyderabad it was reported that 'a faqueer was apprehended […] in the act of addressing the populace in seditious language, in the course of which he told them that they would be joined by a regiment from Secunderabad'.[128] However, once again the Residency files dealing with the investigation of the attempted storming of the Residency paint a rather more complex picture, albeit one in which the blending of sepoy discontent with opportunist religious sermonising proved an explosive compound. Along with the Rohila Afghan native sergeant (*jamaʿdār*) Tōra Bāz Khān, the other suspected ringleader was a preacher called Mawlwī ʿAlāʾ al-dīn, though in a letter to his superiors in Calcutta Resident Davidson also wrote of 'a certain Maulvi named Syud Ahmed [who] still has meetings with the sepoys at a mosque between the City and Secunderabad'.[129] Despite the emerging grand narrative of intrinsic Muslim fanaticism that would play such a prominent role in colonial politics from 1857 to the present day, at the time itself Resident Davidson and others in Hyderabad suspected that the uprising was orchestrated by the slighted (but highly influential) notable Shams al-Umarā Muhammad Rafīʿ al-dīn Khān (d. 1294/1877) as a means of discrediting his rival, the Prime Minister Sir Sālār Jang, whom Davidson had helped bring to power. Indeed, the Residency files contain a letter of protest written by Shams al-Umarā, explaining that while like many other religious figures under his family's patronage Mawlwī ʿAlāʾ al-dīn had been granted a daily allowance (*yawmiyya*) of eight annas by his youngest son Nawwāb Iqtidār al-Mulk, this in no sense rendered the *mawlwī* a 'servant' under his family's command.[130] To support a man of God was

a customary duty of the Muslim elite, he went on, but that did not affect the *mawlwī*'s right and capacity to act as a free agent. Still, given the ubiquity of affiliations to holy men among India's Muslims in the nineteenth century, it is unsurprising to find that the 'rebel' (*mufsid*) Mawlwī ʿAlāʾ al-dīn had his own Sufi connections as well. In his letter to Resident Davidson, Shams al-Umarā noted that his family supported ʿAlāʾ al-dīn because he was a relative of the late Shujāʿ al-dīn, a figure who is clearly to be identified with the famous Hyderabadi *faqīr* Hāfiz Mīr Shujāʾ al-dīn Husayn (d. 1265/1848), who had many followers among the Nizam's elite, including the state's ruler Nizam Sikandar Jāh (r. 1218/1803–1244/1829).[131] Whatever the *faqīr* connection to the uprisings in Hyderabad and Bolarum, the initial intelligence reports from the Residency show the *Sitz im Leben* of 'Islamic' rebellions in colonial India, which need to be located in a contextual myriad of political concerns rather than a timeless narrative of religious fanaticism.

Let us return again to the *Narrative* and the events at Bolarum nearly two years before the attempt to storm the Residency in 1857. We are still at the point when the angry sepoys are gathering outside their commander's bungalow. Having heard the cries of the crowd, Brigadier Mackenzie personally went outside to chase away 'the excited Muhammadan rabble, full of opium and wickedness'.[132] But when he stepped outside for a second time, the protestors broke into the bungalow compound bearing their guns and wounded Mackenzie, who after returning indoors to safety was wounded again, this time more seriously, when the crowd burst into the bungalow itself and someone struck him a sword blow to the head. After the family of the Contingent's chaplain at Bolarum, Mr Murphy, were slashed as they rode their carriage unawares into the compound, the rioting continued right through the night, so that by morning the whole cantonment had been ravaged beyond recognition. Uncertain as to what to do, but believing that a full mutiny was already underway, the officers who gathered round the wounded Mackenzie decided to send a message to Resident Davidson at Secunderabad for him to send reinforcements. By the Sunday evening – two nights after the revolt had begun – the reinforcements arrived, which consisted of Indian soldiers of the 11th Native Cavalry alongside British troops of the 3rd Madras European regiment, under the overall command of Colonel George Cornish Whitlock (1798–1868), who later played an important role in the suppression of the 1857 Rebellion in Central India.[133] The calling in of soldiers from outside the Contingent was a judicious move, partly in avoiding later revenge or recrimination among soldiers of the

same unit and partly in correctly judging the loyalty of the Madras Army, which despite having the largest proportion of Muslim sepoys did not have a single unit mutiny during the Rebellion of 1857.[134]

When the reinforcements arrived, the revolt began to dissolve, and in the negotiations that ensued some six sepoys were handed over as the guilty ringleaders. The *Narrative* informs us that in the midst of these negotiations – at which point order had still by no means been restored – a native officer came before one Lieutenant Campbell with the news that a large force of soldiers had been dispatched by the Nizam a dozen miles away in Hyderabad to come to the aid of the mutineers. With the spread of this rumour (for such it seems to have been), confusion broke out on all sides. When the rumoured 'news' was communicated back to the Resident, he decided to withdraw the reinforcements he had just sent, who were subsequently commanded to fall back to protect the Residency in Secunderabad. As the following days passed, the confusion and tension of the standoff began to wane as it became clear that the Nizam was sending no such troops to reinvigorate the revolt. A handful ('ten to sixteen') of the rebel soldiers was arrested, and an inquiry launched, but the diplomatic cost of having doubted the loyalty of the Nizam and so insulted him and the efforts of some of the British officers to sabotage any inquiry which might injure the reputation of their men meant that, in the words of our informant in the *Narrative*, the rebellion was subsumed by 'the hushing-up system'.[135] For his part, despite his desperate condition, Brigadier Mackenzie survived, though only at the cost of four months of convalescence and a good deal of damage to his reputation.[136]

Now let us compare the two versions of the events that we have read. While *Afzal al-karāmāt* enlivened its narrative of the rebellion in the form of a short and dramatic anecdote, its account of the actual sequence of events essentially coheres with that in the anonymous *Narrative* right up to the arrival of the British reinforcements sent by the Resident. What is of most value in comparing the two accounts is that their divergence came at the very point of ambiguity at which the 'facts' of events, agency and the chain of causality had become hazy and indistinct amid the confusion of the uprising. For the anonymous 'eyewitness' of the *Narrative* could offer no better explanation of the strange withdrawal of the Resident's relief force than to say that it was caused by a rumour about the Nizam sending troops to support the rebels, which had apparently spread among the British and which – following back the chain of cause and effect – the author of the *Narrative* attempted to trace to its source in a message delivered to Lieutenant Campbell on 24 September. However reasonable this account may (in a mechanical universe) appear, there was no hard

evidence to conclude that the rumour was to blame. Perhaps the 'rumour' was itself a rumour that was given credence in the later report and inquiry for want of a better explanation. Faced with the basic raw material of the same strange event of the sudden withdrawal of the Resident's regiment, the miraculous worldview of the sepoys could count on the possibility of other forms of causality. Perhaps spreading as another rumour, word got round the barracks that the withdrawal had occurred through the intervention of their *faqīr* patron, who had already assisted a good many of their number in the past. When the Indians came to make sense of what had happened at Bolarum, the miracle was called on to explain a moment of exception in the ordinary and predictable sequence of cause and effect, a moment of ambiguity from which, in the words of Peter Berger, there spread the rumour of angels.[137]

By comparing Urdu and English accounts of the 'mutiny' at Bolarum, we have seen that the existence of the miraculous can partly be seen as an interpretation of the same evidence of the senses that is offered to other onlookers, with a 'miracle' or a 'rumour' competing for credibility in the two different accounts. At such moments, traditional Indo-Muslim historiography differed from its mechanistic Anglo-Saxon counterpart less in its recounting of the 'facts' than in its reading of the agency that lay behind them. Miraculous 'subaltern' histories such as *Afzal al-karāmāt* emerge here as a means for life to find narrative form in which the miracle serves as the *raison d'être* of the recording, as the pretext, apologia or even the plain excuse for writing. The miracle *excuses* and in all its mysteriousness explains the desire to record events that are otherwise merely ephemeral, and unworthy of art. The miracle tale is in this sense truly the subaltern's art. In Hyderabad it was the equivalent of the English 'Penny Dreadfuls' and, ultimately, of the naturalistic novels of nineteenth-century Europe in which the life of the ordinary man found expression through the dramatisation of rare breaches in the canvas of daily life. The miracles of Afzal Shāh formed a narrative counterpart to the gruesome murders of the Penny Dreadfuls and their more artful expression by the likes of Dickens, Zola and Hardy. For murder and miracle were both *khāriq al-ʿādat* – the inexplicable 'out-of-the-ordinary' – that every society chooses to remember over the ephemeral events of the quotidian. Through the art of narrative, in Muslim India the miracle became the spice that preserved the sepoy's life. Like the similarly insubstantial *barakat* of the *faqīrs* that sustains it, the miracle is a nebulous: *élan* the presence of it renders even the most banal episodes – a soldier's swift promotion, a night-time walk on a country road – worth the attention of biographer's pen.

Changing army attitudes: Bolarum and the military evangelicals

Now that we have compared both narratives of the events at Bolarum, it is time to place Brigadier Mackenzie's religious enthusiasm into the context of the evangelical revival and its influence on Muslim soldiers serving the Company and later the Raj. Assessing the scale of the evangelicals' influence in the armies of India is made difficult by the official discouragement of army chaplains or missionaries preaching to the native soldiers, rendering the official archival sources poor informants on the unofficial activities of those evangelicals who were employed in the armies of empire. Despite the opposition of many officers of the old school, evangelical Protestantism did infiltrate the native ranks.[138] Many of the chaplains assigned to the British soldiers of the East India Company and later the Raj stood at the forefront of the evangelical push to convert India's Hindus and Muslims to Christianity. Having been refused work by the Church Missionary Society, no less a missionary than Revd Henry Martyn (1781–1812), revered as the missionary pioneer to the Indian Muslims for his translation of the New Testament into garbled Arabic and Persian, spent all but the last months of his career working as a military chaplain in the North Indian cantonments of Dinapur and Kanpur.[139] Like other military chaplains who overstepped their official remit, Martyn frequently preached to the cantonment's Indian residents. His Victorian biographer Jesse Page recounted how in the Kanpur cantonment it was Martyn's habit to 'gather under the verandah of his bungalow a large crowd of beggars, fakirs, and the very off-scourings of the place […] to bring them within reach of the words of eternal life, and therefore to this motley assemblage he would stand and solemnly read the Scriptures in Hindustani.'[140]

Some four decades before the outbreak of the Great Rebellion at Kanpur in 1857, here was an official army chaplain seeking to convert Indians to Christianity. Nor was it only chaplains who were guilty of this, for evangelicals were also found among the military officers of the Indian Army. In May 1857, Revd Henry Polehampton, the chaplain of Lucknow, wrote in a letter to his mother of the trouble caused by a regimental colonel at Barrakpur 'who has been preaching Christianity in the bazaar of the [military] station'.[141] A more famous example is General Hugh Wheeler (1789–1857) of Kanpur, who made no secret of the fact that he regarded his sepoys as 'lost and ruined sinners by nature and by practice' and, writing in April 1857, openly declared that he 'endeavoured to convert sepoys and others to Christianity'.[142] The role of evangelical chaplains and officers in the native regiments of India was not limited to

attempts to actively convert the Indian soldier. For, in the wider Indian picture of religious change, the chief importance of the pious captains and sermonising chaplains was, on the one hand, their denigration of the 'superstition' of a miracle-centred religiosity and, on the other, their ideology of scripture as the basis of 'true religion'. This ideology was given concrete form in the Bible portions, tracts and diatribes that Martyn and his evangelical friends were busy translating into the same 'Hindustani' lingua franca that connected the sepoy to his officers, slotting their Christian message in the linguistic middle ground between the soldier and his commanders. Cloaked in this common Hindustani idiom it is not hard to see how, for sepoys and other subalterns the message of the white preacher was hard to separate from the decrees of the commanding officer or the cantonment magistrate in that same language.

Despite the official ban on proselytising to the sepoys, the presence in the Company Army of such committed evangelicals as Henry Martyn points us towards examples of an 'unofficial' agenda of which the Bolarum uprising was only one.[143] The evangelical Governor-General Lord Teignmouth (1751–1834, in office 1793–8), who waited until his retirement before becoming the founding President of the British and Foreign Bible Society and throwing in his lot with the Clapham Sect, was careful not to openly proselytise Indians while in the Company's service. Indeed, in 1813, the Bengal Government had banned the circulation of Christian Scripture portions among the sepoys.[144] By the same token, it was not until his own retirement in 1873 that Brigadier Mackenzie of Bolarum began to officially work for such organisations as the Evangelical Alliance, the Bible Society and the Lord's Day Observance Society. (Recall here the rationale for cancelling Muharram at Bolarum: it fell on the Christian Sabbath![145]) But Mackenzie's small act of evangelical defiance at Bolarum – and its riotous repercussions – was part of a new proselytising determination taking shape in the first half of the nineteenth century, which within eighteenth months of the Bolarum uprising would explode with an outcry of righteous indignation as the Rebellion of 1857 broke out.[146] As the events of 1857 took shape, a dominant theme of the many sermons preached in response to the news of the 'mutiny' was the need to bring to the sepoys the civilising benefits of Christianity. As the missionary of the Free Church of Scotland Revd John Murray Mitchell declared in 1859, the Rebellion illustrated all too clearly the need for 'prompt and energetic action towards the evangelisation of India'.[147] He quoted with approval a speech made by 'an educated Native' that 'some sort of training, at least, should be imparted to Sepoys, whom, of all others, it is absolutely requisite to humanise and bring under the fear of God.'[148] For Mitchell and others like him, such 'education' had to be of an

expressly Christian kind, for the murderous events of 1857 had 'revealed the character of Heathenism' and shown to all that 'heathen religion' was nothing more than the 'saturnalia of fiends'.[149] Of course, this characterisation of Indian religions was by no means born in the aftermath of the rebellion, and evangelicals like Mitchell merely took the blood-letting as confirmation of their existing opinions, unhappy proof with which to convince their sceptics who wished to maintain the old spirit of laissez-faire toleration towards sepoy religion. It was this attitude towards the Islam of the sepoys – regarding the carnivalism of Muharram as a precise example of such 'heathen' saturnalia – that lay behind the actions of Brigadier Mackenzie.

Further support for this interpretation is found in surviving accounts of Mackenzie's wider career. We are able to reassemble a good deal more about Mackenzie's religious opinions and activities in India from a diary kept by his wife, Helen Mackenzie, between 1847 and 1851.[150] Helen Mackenzie was herself a committed evangelical and, during her years in India, became deeply involved with missionary activity at a variety of levels, from encouraging individual missionaries to supporting mission schools and acting as a pioneer of the 'zanana missions' that reached Muslim women in the privacy of their homes.[151] Her account of her husband Colin Mackenzie's activities in India shows that his occupation as an army officer did not prevent him from working for the spread of Christianity among Indians, and the memoir she published as *Six Years in India* contains numerous accounts of Colin Mackenzie handing out Gospel translations or making clear his opinion about the superiority of the Christian faith. In some cases, Colin Mackenzie's links to Indian conversions fell outside his sphere of direct influence in the cantonments and regiments in which he served. Thus, while visiting Delhi in 1847, he attended the Hindustani church service of a Bengali convert and expressed his pleasure on seeing an Indian woman converted there, even questioning the Indian converts on the right understanding of their new faith.[152] On other occasions, as when he first visited the cantonment of Aurangabad in the Nizam's dominions, he was wont to establish links with Indian Christians, whom he and his wife helped support and encourage.[153] Of greatest significance, however, are Mackenzie's proselytising activities among the sepoys themselves, showing how such men of official influence were in practice able to circumvent the theoretical ban on preaching to the Indian soldiery that the Company and later the Raj has been generally seen as enforcing.

Nor did the experience of the revolt at Bolarum cause Mackenzie to change this *modus operandum*, for his wife recorded in detail his attempts six months later in March 1856 to convince Hasan Khān, a native army

officer under his command, of the superiority of Christianity. When in ecumenical mode Hasan Khān ventured to suggest that Islam and Christianity 'are very much the same', Mackenzie vehemently disagreed, gave him a Persian New Testament and later checked up on his subaltern's reading of it.[154] On another occasion during this period, in Delhi, Mackenzie involved himself in a dispute with Hasan Khān and a group of other Muslims, and just a few months later his wife recorded how he then went as far as to tell them that 'as there was but one God, so was there but one true religion, and *that* he believed to be the Christian faith, and he considered Múhammad an imposter'.[155] Again, Mackenzie followed up this diatribe with a promise to provide a translated Bible to prove his point. For her part, Helen Mackenzie made visits to the *zanāna* of Hasan Khān's womenfolk, where she preached and distributed 'Hindustani' (that is, Urdu) Bible portions.[156] As part of the same unofficial mission, the Mackenzies and other military officials oversaw a project by which the orphan children of sepoys killed during the Anglo-Afghan war were given over to missionaries for their upbringing.[157] In these ways, by making use of the social structure of army life – of wives, children and respectful native officers – an evangelical soldier like Colin Mackenzie was able to promote Christianity on a number of levels while usually avoiding breaking the ban on directly preaching to his soldiers.

Hasan Khān was by no means the sole focus of Mackenzie's efforts. While stationed at the great cantonment at Poona in the Bombay Presidency, Mackenzie held meetings with 'a good many' Christian sepoys serving in the Madras and Bombay armies, his wife making the point (perhaps in response to the criticism of her husband's actions at Bolarum) that the encouragement of Christian sepoys was no longer considered cause for official concern.[158] Even in the years between 1847 and 1851 described in his wife's diary, we find numerous examples of Mackenzie making clear to the sepoys his low opinion of their false faiths. When the Hindu sepoys under his command invited him to attend one of their festivals in October 1847, he explained his adamant refusal to attend with the curiously inconsistent argument that though he intended no disrespect to the soldiers themselves, he fully considered their religion to be idolatry and as such to be 'sinful'. As a result, he did not wish his presence to be understood as suggesting that he either respected their religion or still less considered it the equal of his own.[159] Seen against this background, we might understand the uprising that occurred at Bolarum when (as far as the sepoys were concerned, at least) Mackenzie banned their festival from taking place as representing the final straw in a series of belittlements of sepoy religion. Fortunately, the subaltern *can* speak on

this matter, for as we have seen from *Afzal al-karāmāt*, the sepoys were reacting to what they saw as Mackenzie's outright ban on their festival. Let us be clear about this – for as we see below the sepoys were defending their right to the festive 'R'n'R' of Muharram as much as a modernist notion of religion as abstract faith and bourgeois piety. The ritual displays of the soldier's Islam were not those of the scholar or townsman but a festive response to the strictures of barracks life.

It was not only at the sepoys that Mackenzie aimed his invective, for Helen's diary also records several accounts of her husband's dealings with, and general attitudes towards, the sepoys' religious teachers. On one occasion, he involved himself in a dispute with the 'regimental maulvi' about the superiority of Christianity, and, on another occasion, he tried to convince the regimental *munshī* of the same thing, the result of which was to more or less force the *munshī* into a programme of private Bible study in which Mackenzie read through a Persian translation of St Matthew's Gospel with him.[160] As the regiment's interpreter-cum-bookkeeper, the *munshī* was an important figure in regimental life, and Mackenzie's attempt to win him over to the Christian cause may have been a strategic one. Given the *munshī*'s mastery of the sepoys' language and his position of unofficial but nonetheless real influence over the sepoys as the go-between of officers and men, Mackenzie may well have envisaged a kind of pyramid effect following the *munshī*'s conversion. For our purposes, though, it is the evidence of Mackenzie's attitudes towards the *faqīrs* that is of greatest interest. For in August 1847 he issued a ruling that expressly banned 'all Faqírs or religious mendicants of any description to come within the [cantonment] lines'.[161] In order to ensure that the sepoys understood the sound reasons for his actions, he then assembled the entire regiment (of around 800 men), and, as he

> rode along the ranks he made divers pithy speeches on the iniquity of Faqírs in stirring up strife, describing them as men who said 'For the sake of God, I eat other men's bread; for the sake of God, I am filthy and unclean; for the sake of God, I am an unspeakable rogue'; 'only let me catch one in my lines,' added he, 'and he shall be beaten – so that it shall be terrible.'[162]

We can scarcely imagine a clearer expression of colonial intolerance of the customary *faqīr* holy men of the sepoys. But Mackenzie's attitudes towards *faqīrs* were far from unique, and, writing in 1824 about the sepoys in Secunderabad to James Fraser, erstwhile Resident at Hyderabad, Lord Elphinstone drew a parallel to the native troops at Vellore, stating 'the most seditious doctrines are preached by Fakirs and others, some of whom actually eat the salt of the Circar'.[163] Such earlier attitudes supported those of evangelical military officials such as Mackenzie, who were

capable of not only castigating the religious leaders of the Muslim soldiers but also of effectively banning them from meeting. In the persons of men such as Colin Mackenzie, the command structures of army life afforded evangelical Christianity a position of assertive influence on the religious opinions and practices of the Indian soldier. With officers like these, there was little need for missionaries?

In some respects, Mackenzie's attitude towards the Muharram carnival (for which he was officially rebuked) was out of step with an older military policy, which, since the earliest establishment of Indian regiments under British control, had deliberately encouraged sepoy participation in religious festivals as being good for both the morale of the men and the legitimacy of their officers.[164] So, while Mackenzie and the Bolarum episode point us towards one dimension of the colonial army's changing relationship with Islam in India, this was not the whole picture, and, in direct and indirect ways, the army had previously done much to patronise the customary religion of the sepoys. We have seen the mausoleum of Afzal Shāh as one example, but there were other similar cases. When the Indian cavalry officer Sayyid Ibrāhīm of the Madras Army died in 1800, the Governor at Fort St George issued the following order:

> In order also to perpetuate His Lordship's sense of the Syed's truth and attachment to the Company's service, the Governor in Council has ordered a tomb to be erected to his memory at Cowly Droog, with an establishment of two lamps, and a Fakir for the services of the tomb according to the rites of his religion.[165]

Helen Mackenzie herself described a visit to 'a Múhammadan festival, in honour of one of their saints, who is buried here, and over whose body the British Government has built a tomb, because they thought that the prosperity of the place would be increased by the mélá or fair annually held at his shrine.'[166] Although Helen (and presumably her husband) condemned such patronage in line with other evangelicals as proof of British complicity with the 'superstition' of heathen faiths, the fact remained that in differing degrees such patronage was an important factor in the relationship between Islam and the colonial army. It was, after all, this kind of complicity that we have seen allowing Afzal Shāh to flourish in his living career and in his sepoy-built mausoleum thereafter. But by 1850 this older laissez-faire tolerance was gradually receding through a desire to regulate native festivals, officially on the grounds of preventing both the epidemics caused by large gatherings of 'natives' and the outbreaks of communal disorder, a policy that would grow as the nineteenth century progressed. The evangelical publicity machine had ensured the trickle-down growth of sentiments that sepoy religion was inherently tinged with the barbaric dangers that characterised heathen faiths such as Islam and

Hinduism. In this, the Rebellion of 1857 served as a tipping point, allowing the evangelicals to increase their influence on British minds through their claim that the sepoy murders of white women and children were an inevitable expression of the bloodlust of the barbaric cults that the Company's complicity in their religious practices had virtually encouraged. It is clear that in North India a number of Muslim religious figures were involved in whipping up anti-British sentiments, who included not only such well-known figures as Fazl-e-Haqq of Khayrabad but also forgotten men of similar status to Afzal Shāh like Mawlānā Yahyā ʿAlī of Patna and Mawlānā Pīr ʿAlī of Lucknow.[167] There was then a degree of accuracy to colonial conceptions of an 'Islamic' conspiracy, but it was one in which Christian evangelicals played no less a role.

It is important therefore that we recognise the changing current of attitudes reflected in Hyderabad in the events of, and, moreover, the motivations behind the Bolarum uprising. For on both sides these motivations were a presage of those seen in the larger sepoy rebellion of 1857. As the nineteenth century progressed, through the persons of individuals such as Colin Mackenzie and, more importantly, through the evangelical publicity machine of the printed tracts and sermons with which the Victorian reading public was so preoccupied, the evangelicals became an important contributor to changing attitudes to Indian religions. But the evangelicals were never to control the relationship of the colonial state to its Muslim soldiers, even if, as we see in Chapter 3, in its secularised form as the 'civilising mission' (note the common vocabulary of 'mission') the critique of Indian religions was to find considerable executive power.

Even if it did not reflect official military policy, Mackenzie's attitude towards the noisy bacchanals of Muharram reflected not only the opinions of other evangelicals in military service (most famously the missionary chaplain Henry Martyn), but also the growing colonial sentiment in the wake of the Great Rebellion that traditional sepoy festivities were not a part of 'true religion'. For this reason, such festive 'saturnalia' had to be stopped, or at least contained. Through the regulating hand of the army and the foundation of the Nizam's police force later in the century, such regulation policies became widespread in both Hyderabad and British India.[168] While dressed in the language of crowd control and hygiene, in practice these policies were a precise correlation to those promoted by the evangelicals. As the Revd Nicholas Moody had declared during September 1857 in a sermon preached at St Clements church in Oxford, the army 'cannot patronize idolatry and falsehood'.[169] A host of other commentators agreed: preaching to the sepoys – or at least purifying their own religion of its barbarous tendencies – would not only be good for the sepoys themselves but would also ensure the stability of empire.[170]

Religion – particularly false or 'heathen' religion – was regarded by many British Christians as the root cause of the Rebellion of 1857 and so, in the words of another contemporary commentator, the army held the responsibility to 'lay the basis for a purer religion' among its Indian soldiers.[171]

Even if many army officers disputed them, such attitudes appeared to be confirmed by the connections sought and seen between Indian Muslim festivals and other anti-colonial rebellions, as in the link seen later between the *nurcha* rituals performed during Muharram by the Mopilla Muslims of Malabar and the 'Moplah' uprisings of the early 1900s.[172] As the evangelicals entered the army and administration of the Company in the decades before 1857 through influence at the East India Company College at Haileybury and the patronage of evangelical chaplains to the soldiers, there was a strong – if often covert and contested – religious dimension to the suppression or containment of Muslim celebrations. In the decades after the end of Company rule in 1858, these tendencies grew stronger as the evangelical influence slipped into the more palatable language of the civilising mission. By the high Victorian era, colonial conceptions of Anglo-Saxon civilisation were to become inseparable from the idea of Protestant Christianity as the most rational, civilised and enlightened of the world's religions. Even for colonial administrators who would not hear of converting India's Muslims, there remained the belief that certain aspects of their religion needed to be either crushed from without or reformed from within. The true extent to which this pattern was representative of developments in the many other military contexts of India can only be assessed by further research, but its presence in the regiments of Hyderabad is clear.

Even if Mackenzie's attitude towards the noisy celebrations of Muharram did not reflect official military policy, it did therefore reflect wider sentiments that such festivities could not possibly be a reflection of the religion of a civilised people. Of course, British conceptions of 'true religion' drew on a long-standing Protestant (and, for the many Scottish officers in the Contingent, a Calvinist) tradition in which the drunken revelling and ear-splitting drumming that characterised Muslim no less than Hindu holy days in India appeared to be the antithesis of the quiet, personal reflection and respectful attendance to sermons that formed the basic template of religious activity for most Britons as reproduced in the garrison churches of India's cantonments. As colonial knowledge of other religions began to develop, European scholars' emphasis on scripture and origins led to the formulation of a no less Protestant vision of the 'true' character of Islam. Primers on the religions of those Indians under the East India Company's command and administration were based on these principles of 'core beliefs' and were widely distributed among military

officers and administrators, while missionary groups funded similar expansions in the 'understanding' of native religions.[173] As a result of seeing the religious festivities of India through such Protestant lenses, many Britons came to the conclusion that the Indians themselves did not know their own religion properly. As Helen Mackenzie casually remarked with regard to Shiʿi and Sunni Muslims, 'both parties in India are extremely ignorant of their own religion'.[174] From this increasingly widespread perspective, festivities such as the Muharram processions of the Deccan, in which groups of men dressed as tigers, bears and women and in which large numbers of revellers enjoyed the intoxicating pleasures of *bhāng* and toddy, seemed to embody the state of decline into which Islam had fallen in India. As the author of the *Narrative* wrote of the Muharram processions at Bolarum, the festival was usually 'a season of unbridled licence, during which they [the Muslims] become perfectly insane with excitement, ardent spirits, opium and bhang'.[175] This was not, in other words, an expression of 'true religion' of any kind, still less of the quiet reflective tenets of the Protestant Briton.

Yet such attitudes had not always been held, and only a generation earlier it was still possible to speak of India's religious festivals with fascination rather than disdain. One of the most colourful of these earlier accounts of Muharram in Hyderabad was penned around 1798 by Charlotte Florentina Clive (1778–1866), who wrote of how

A variety of curious figures preceded the *Tabouts*, and *Pimjas* – here, a champion in armour, with a mask, and there, another with a head-piece (resembling Mambrino's helmet in Don Quixote with the exception of being polished iron, instead of brass.) In one place, a party beating their breasts with violence, and exclaiming '*ya Hussein, ya Hussein;*' another, chanting a doleful ditty; and a third, marching with a solemn pace and a downcast look. In another situation, a set of devotees – cutting no from the appearance of their countenances, a good joke in *their* way – and refreshing their exhausted frames by a hearty whiff from a well dressed hookah; another, of frantic wretches dealing in imagination only, death and destruction to the enemies of *Ali*, – and each man by his gestures, and actions, apparently combating a host of foes, while a set of funny fellows – one in particular with his *body* and *hair*, dyed blue – were dispersing in a most bountiful manner, and by way of encouragement, filling the eyes of the champion, and the mouths of the chanters, with a handful of sweet *Abeere*, – one man was riding a sham camel, which was very unruly in his motions; another represented an enormous tiger, and a third, a beast I never saw, viz: a tiger-man, with a long tail, and his legs chained, to prevent from getting loose. These, and a thousand other antics, joined to the noise occasioned by drums, and fifes; collery horns, and trumpets; nobuts and cymbals; produced such a confusion of sounds, as it is impossible to describe, and contrasted with the solemn dignity of the Omrahs, the hollow sound of the Naggar (or large drum) and the anxiety of the Tabout, Pimja, and Aftabgeery bearers, and

followers, excited no small degree of pleasure, from contemplation of human nature, in all its different stages and situations.[176]

But as Britain's evangelical revival began to make its influence felt in India during the middle years of the nineteenth century, it became more difficult for Europeans to express simple pleasure in such spectacles and still less to understand them as being connected to 'religion'. Disapproving sentiments were already being voiced by British administrators in the first half of the nineteenth century, and, alongside opinionated army officers such as Colin Mackenzie, it is to these figures rather than the scholarly Orientalists that the British share of the seeds of religious reform in India should be credited, for army officers and civil administrators were the crucial cultural middlemen who were dealing with Indians in person on a daily basis, transferring their values on the kind of incremental basis that we have seen during the career of Mackenzie (who was not averse to correcting his Muslim charges on their misapprehension of even their own religion when it came to their belief in holy men and their powers). Helen Mackenzie tells us that on one occasion her husband and his unfortunate *munshī* 'had a great argument about Wális [i.e. Muslim saints]. These', she added, 'are supposed prophets, who have the power of working miracles'.[177] Brigadier Mackenzie would have none of this and so told the *munshī* to prove it, to which the Muslim responded by recounting the stories of two miracles performed by a certain *walī* to whom the *munshī* clearly owed allegiance. In the first story, the holy man warned the *munshī* from accompanying his regiment to Peshawar in 1840 as part of the first Anglo-Afghan war and was of course proved right when the regiment was slaughtered by the Afghans. In the second story, the same holy man cured the *munshī*'s daughter of the dumbness that had afflicted her from birth.[178] On hearing these stories that closely reflect those we have heard told by the sepoys about Afzal Shāh, Mackenzie claimed that he knew of this so-called *walī* about whom his *munshī* was speaking and that he was the same man that had embezzled a large sum of money from Captain Nicolson during the Afghan campaign.[179] And so the *munshī* was disenchanted of his old allegiance and, according to the account of Helen Mackenzie, turned on his saintly protector and called him 'a great Dagha-báz or rogue'.[180] The Brigadier had convinced his subaltern of the folly of his faith.

Although we must be hesitant in generalising from the evidence from Hyderabad, a sample of wider military memoirs from the period makes it clear that these kinds of debates were far from unique, revealing similar encounters taking place between British officials and Muslims in other regions of India. On the other side of the subcontinent to Mackenzie in

Bolarum, influential evangelical officers were also making clear their low estimation of the Islam of their soldiers, which they contrasted with the reasonableness of their own faith. As Herbert Edwardes (1819–68) wrote of the circumstances surrounding the sickness that spread through a regiment of Hindustani soldiers stationed at Lukkee under General Cortlandt in 1847, 'The place where they were cantoned had been taken ignorantly from a faker, to whose vengeance the natives [soldiers] attributed the sickness, but the less superstitious European officer will see in it only the operation of natural causes, and avoid the place in future.'[181] Writing of the Pathans among whom he was long stationed, Edwardes described how

> The vilest jargon was to them pure Arabic from the blessed Koran, the clumsiest imposture a miracle, and the fattest fakeer a saint […] the Moollah and the Kâzee, the Peer and the Syud descended to the smiling vale armed with a panoply of spectacles and owl-like looks, miraculous rosaries, infallible amulets, and tables of descent from the Prophet Muhommud. Each new-comer, like St. Peter, held the keys of heaven; and the whole, like Irish beggars, were equally prepared to bless or curse to all eternity him who gave or who withheld.[182]

In 1844, William Sleeman (1788–1856) – the colonial administrator-hero par excellence – echoed this same critique in his memoirs. Here we see the colonial official entering religious debates like Mackenzie and siding therein with Indian critics of popular Muslim festivals. Sleeman thus listened approvingly to a group of ʿ*ulamā* at the great *madrasa* of Ghāzī al-dīn Khān (influential under its later name of the Delhi College from around 1827) when they berated the travesty of 'the letter and spirit of the [Islamic] law' seen in the construction of elaborate mausolea and 'drums beating and trumpets sounding even among the tombs of the saints'.[183] Most Muslims, then, did not even practise their own faith properly. As Helen Mackenzie remarked of the Bolarum celebrations which her husband banned, Muharram had become 'perverted from its original purpose'.[184] Like Sleeman a few years earlier, she too expressed her relative approval of the 'stricter and more learned' Muslims who disapprove of such festivals for their 'mummery and license'.[185] It was through such incremental and quotidian encounters that the British lent their support to a pre-existing but still, by the early nineteenth century, minority tradition of soberly scriptural Islam that best reflected colonial conceptions of 'true religion'. It was a reflection of this wider process that we have seen at work in the closed regimental world of Bolarum.

The Bolarum 'reform' process is also echoed in the memoirs of the North Indian soldier Sītā Rām, the most famous sepoy text of the colonial era. In his account of sepoy festivities, Sītā Rām noted how in the past the

British officers used to share the enjoyment of watching dancing girls' 'nautches' along with their sepoys, but, by the middle of the nineteenth century, this had stopped, 'for their Padre Sahebs have told them it is wrong'.[186] The evangelical army chaplains' moral critique of the high times of Indian festivity was closely echoed by the Muslim reformists of the same period, who also issued diatribes at 'nautch' performances and, particularly, their appearance in festivals held at the shrines of Muslim saints. We have already seen how Afzal Shāh organised musical concerts for his sepoy followers, and it was on precisely these occasions that courtesan (*tawāʾif*) 'nautch' dancers traditionally performed. In contrast to the denigration of this old combination of piety and pleasure, we witness in the revolt against Mackenzie's orders at Bolarum a spirited defence of the sepoys' carnivalesque Islam that was by now suffering the combined blows of disapproving Englishmen and home-grown Indian reformists.[187] Here was the crucial rift in Western understanding of Islam, whose formulation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries pruned the various cultural expressions of living Muslims so as to fit them into the abstraction of Islam as seen through the category of 'religion'.[188] What the sepoys were defending in Bolarum was not the right to pray, read scripture or follow the Sharīʿa, but the right to celebrate.[189] If the Muharram festivals could be equated with European ideas of 'religion', then it was very much in the Catholic mode. Like the 'weddings' (*ʿurs*) of the Muslim saints, Muharram in India was part of an Islam of the carnivalesque that in Afzal Shāh's own lifetime was also described by Jaʿfar Sharīf, a Deccani Muslim employed as a *munshī* in the Madras Army.[190] Jaʿfar Sharīf even described how people dressed up as sepoys as part of the Muharram mummers, phoney soldiers who accompanied another reveller dressed up as the Hindu quartermaster Baqqāl, whom they comically berated for overcharging them for their barrack-hall provisions.[191] Appropriately, other standard characters among the mummers' ritual mockery included Qāzī-e-laʿīn and Qāzī-e-bē dīn, the 'cursed' and the 'faithless' *qāzīs* – the Muslim religious were here no less fair game than the avaricious Hindu merchant.[192] As the nineteenth century progressed, the influence of the reformists of India's Islam would grow, their effect on wider Indian society echoed in the army through the work of evangelical chaplains and officers. But for all the denigration of their status, the *faqīrs* were still seen as able to intervene in attacks on the festivals that surrounded them, and (in the eyes of devotees at least) British interference with their festivals could have severe consequences. This is seen in an anecdote recorded in North India a few decades before the incident at Bolarum found in the memoirs of the British resident of Lucknow, Mrs Meer Hasan Ali. She recorded a story she had heard of a British officer

from the Kanpur garrison visiting the festive death anniversary of the great patron of the *faqīrs*, Shāh Madār (d. *c.* 840/1436) at nearby Makanpur. Although warned by the shrine's guardians not to enter the mausoleum, the officer strolled nonchalantly in wearing his riding boots, only to immediately faint and finally expire a few short hours later.[193] The erstwhile North Indian sepoy Dīn Muhammad ('Dean Mahomet') recorded a similar story about a British lieutenant of artillery. On seeing the Muslims' (and perhaps his own sepoys') devotions at a Sufi shrine near the garrison of Monghyr, the Lieutenant 'imputed their zeal to the force of prejudice and superstition' and promptly pissed on the grave. Again, the holy man's wrath had to be reckoned with, and Dīn Muhammad tells us that 'having rode but a few paces from the tomb, he was thrown from his horse to the ground, where he lay some time speechless; and being conveyed to Monghere [garrison] on a litter, soon after his arrival expired.'[194] Through his miraculous intervention, the holy man could clearly defend what the ordinary colonial subject could not.

Like any other human offspring, religion was not so easily controlled, and, for all the colonial critique of Indian 'superstition', the British experience of war in India cultivated the strange fruit of experiences of the supernatural that sat uncomfortably with colonial self-perceptions of rational religiosity. In some of the personal narratives of the 'Mutiny' of 1857, we hear alternative senses of history from that of the bluff militiamen who usually composed the Mutiny and campaign histories of British India. Of course, most Victorian accounts of 1857, fictional or historical, posited 'superstition' as the exclusive characteristic of the sepoy, the same inclination towards bad religion that had allowed the sepoys to be cajoled into rebellion in the first place by the 'fakir' instigators who crop up in many a 'Mutiny' account. Thus, for Sir George Trevelyan (1838–1928), whose *Cawnpore* (1865) was probably the most influential of all the popular histories of the Great Rebellion, the root causes of the revolt lay expressly in 'the madness of superstition'.[195]

There were, though, exceptions to this one-sided imputation of credulity, and a no-less marginalized experience of Britons (many of them women) and the supernatural developed alongside the public critique of Indian superstition. The most notable of supernatural incidents connected with the 'Mutiny' was the story of Jessie Brown's dream, which told of the presentiment of the relief of Lucknow by the wife of an English corporal besieged in the Residency, who heard in her slumber the fife of the Highlanders' rescue force before anyone around her. Having first appeared in a short news report, the story was picked up by the Irish dramatist Dion Boucicault (1820–90), who transformed it into his popular melodrama, *Jessie Brown; or, The Relief of Lucknow*.[196] (The tale also

found voice in a song for piano written by Grace Campbell and John Blockley [1800–82], containing the less than immortal lines, 'Hark! Surely I'm no wildly dreamin', For I hear it plainly now', to be sung, apparently, with a strong Scots burr.)[197] If the story of Jessie Brown was an ambiguous one, possibly suggesting merely the acuteness of Jessie's hearing in detecting the pipes of the rescuing Highlanders as much as a supernatural premonition, then there were also other strange tales that surrounded the Mutiny's official history of this-worldly heroism. Another story of such colonial perceptions of the supernatural concerns events surrounding the Rebellion in Sialkot in Punjab, events which were also – like the earlier rebellion at Bolarum – instrumental in creating the reputation of a new Muslim saint. The Sialkot story was drawn up from survivors' testaments by Captain Gregory Rich. In his account of events at the Sialkot cantonment, Rich described how

> Two days before the actual outbreak of the Mutiny in the station a curious circumstance occurred. Mrs Hunter, wife of the Presbyterian Missionary had a dream in which she saw the dead bodies of her husband and baby lying before her. The dream she believed to be a warning from God, and indication that they should leave the place immediately.[198]

Despite the pleas of the missionary's wife, the cantonment authorities would hear nothing of escape, and the Hunters were prevented from leaving the cantonment on the grounds that it would signal a lack of faith in the as-yet-still-loyal sepoys. But the Rebellion did reach Sialkot, and, when it did, husband, wife and baby were all slain. Mrs Hunter's dream had come true.[199] As in the more famous story of Jessie's dream, Captain Rich managed to avoid contradicting the 'rational' and activist paradigms of the colonial self-image by connecting this fanciful but ultimately correct prediction to a woman. Even when the supernatural appeared among Britons, then it was not among sound-minded men, who, after all, ran the Empire, but among their womenfolk, whose credulity was never stretched to the lengths of an outright visible miracle but rather to the dreamtime promptings of Providence.[200]

Given our theme of the colonial army's connection with *faqīrs*, Captain Rich's story had an appropriate ending. After the assassin was discovered and executed by the British, local people from Sialkot carried his corpse away and buried it in the town's Muslim cemetery. There, Rich recorded,

> the city prostitutes kept a light burning on the tomb, and made a pilgrimage to it once a year. A second monument was erected to his memory by the Mohammedans of the Sadar Bazar […] and is still visited by devotees with lights and offerings; who, not knowing the facts, believe it to be the tomb of some martyr or saint.[201]

Just as Afzal Shāh's association with the uprising at Bolarum served his reputation well in the decades after his death, so here in Sialkot the assassin's little role in the larger uprising of 1857 was enough to turn his grave into a shrine and, by possession of such a shrine, to turn his memory from that of a turncoat cantonment gaoler (such that he was) into that of a holy man.

In Captain Rich's story, the clash between what Colonial Captains regarded as matters of 'fact' and 'superstition' found the strangest of outlets. Here, an Indian once paid by Englishmen to whip the flesh of other Indians found atonement for his treachery in the murder of a missionary, whose Scottish wife had seen it all coming in a dream. At the two ends of the tale is violence: flogging and murder. And at the two ends of the tale is the numinous as well: a prediction fulfilled and ashrine's sacred soil. The efforts of the colonial missionary Revd Thomas Hunter had vanished ineffectually, and, in their place, the tomb of a new Muslim saint had risen instead, an outpost of 'superstition' garlanded by women with morals colonial order so different from the good Reverend's wife. Here religious practice saw the turned upside down. For all the imperial rhetoric of reason and order, in Captain Rich's story the Empire is laid bare: it was a place of violence, confusion and strange happenings that bewildered both Indians and Englishmen. As at Bolarum, it was a place where rational and moral agency, cause and blame, were lost in the fog of war.

The apotheosis of a Muslim padre

It would be a mistake to project onto the account of the Bolarum uprising in *Afzal al-karāmāt* a narrative of 'Indian' national resistance to colonial rule and, in doing so, perceive the history of the Contingent's sepoys in the blunt terms of 'colonial' resistance and 'Indian' oppression. Whether with regard to the Bolarum revolt or to the larger rebellion that swept northern India to brush its tail through the Nizam's State during 1857, to project back the emergence of a 'national' sentiment misses the multiple shades of identity and loyalty from which the soldiery of India was formed. Nor should we see either the uprising at Bolarum or the Great Rebellion as an absolute cut-off point that marks some kind of evangelical conquest of the military institutions of colonial India. The picture was complex, and, though in the second half of the century evangelicalism was to influence wider colonial attitudes and policies towards the Islam of the Indian soldier, sepoys continued to associate themselves with *faqīrs*, just as the army continued to provide them with the wages with which they built their shrines. What we have undertaken is, after all, a case study of particular

events in Hyderabad. In any case, such a rigid reading of history would fail to take into account the fact that as a social organisation the army was able to create multiple affinities and loyalties across the boundaries of ethnic, religious or 'national' identity.[202] In rejecting the possibility that people can forge relationships that transcend ethnicity, employment and command, the underlying assumption that all 'colonial' relationships are destined to be hostile and adversarial is deeply anti-humanist.[203] Although the attitudes of British officers to the men under their command was frequently scathing, there were those officers for whom their soldiers were objects of affection and sources of pride. This is not to try to repaint the face of empire with a benevolent smile, for the economic structures of colonialism are always fundamentally exploitative. But, on the micro-historical scale of individual life, such relationships were inevitably complex and varied.

Taken together, *Afzal al-karāmāt* and the *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum* enable us to map some of these neglected contours of affinity and loyalty. For its part, the motivation behind the writing of the *Narrative* seems to have been to defend the honour and reputation of the Contingent's soldiers. While we cannot discount the possibility of its anonymous author's personal enmity with Brigadier Mackenzie (who comes off rather badly in the text), the underlying affinities that the *Narrative* traces are those reflected in what it presented as the fundamental loyalty of the Contingent's soldiers to their comrades, particularly in the case of the 3rd Infantry.[204] Of course, this affection was inherently paternal in tone, but such paternalism was by no means a colonial import. It was, on the contrary, a form of association that underwrote many other social relations in India, including those between the *faqīr* and his disciple and those between members of the stratified hierarchical society of India at large. This picture of local accommodation rather than nationalist contention is reflected in the other major episode in *Afzal al-karāmāt* in which the British authorities appear. In this narrative, we read how, as the chief representative of the British in Hyderabad, Resident Davidson first came to hear of Afzal Shāh from the soldiers of the Contingent.[205] Having listened to accounts of the *faqīr*'s many deeds, the Resident wrote to Afzal Shāh, explaining that he knew he had a great many followers and that if Afzal Shāh wished he would arrange for a grant (*maʿāsh*) to be made to him from the Nizam's State coffers. The Resident then dispatched this message in the care of Mīrzā Zulfan Bēg, who went before Afzal Shāh and politely explained who the letter was from. In response, in accordance with a classic hagiographical topos, Afzal Shāh commanded his follower to throw the letter into the well. When the Mīrzā hesitated, the *faqīr* swore that if he disobeyed he would no longer consider him his disciple.

Here Resident Cuthbert Davidson was cast in a narrative role played in earlier writings on the Muslim saints by the grandees of the Mughal Empire and the Delhi Sultanate. By placing Davidson into these Indian shoes, the story of the turned-down grant reflected the Indianisation of the British in the historical imagination of Hyderabad's Muslim chroniclers. Given the fact that from the 1820s selected Muslim religious figures were paid stipends by the colonial army to attend to the welfare of their Hindu and Muslim soldiers, it is possible that the story reflected an attempt by the authorities of the Contingent to formalise the relationship between their sepoys and Afzal Shāh rather than sheer cultic fantasy. The establishment of such a class of 'regimental maulvis' (and their equivalents, the 'regimental pandits') was the result of a General Order issued in March 1825, declaring that 'a pandit and a maulvee be added from the Proximo to the Interpreter and Quarter Master Establishment at every Regiment of Native Cavalry and Infantry of the Line on an allowance of 8 Sonnaut Rupees/mensem each'.[206] The duties and employment of these religious employees were explicitly modelled after those of the Christian regimental padres assigned to European troops. In this way, *pādrī* typically (though not always) became the unofficial synonym for figures employed on more or less official terms as 'regimental maulvis'. Such native chaplains were expected to be present at all courts martial and courts of enquiry, as well as to preside over oath-taking ceremonies, so helping to assure both the loyalty of the soldier and the legitimacy of his employer.[207] A contemporary account of a Sikh native chaplain (known in Hindustani as a *grānthī*) swearing in sepoys under the guiding eye of Colin Mackenzie describes the process in detail, as the sepoys 'slipped off their shoes, touched the [Sikh holy] book with one or both hands, made salám to it, and then kept their hands either on it or on its charpai while the Granthi read the oath'.[208] As we have seen earlier, the recognised status of these figures in the army did not prevent evangelicals from attacking what they saw as wilful patronage of heathenism. In 1859, Revd Robert Williamson deplored the evidence of this that was seen in Collectors' records from the Bombay Presidency showing the Bombay Army paying 1,000 rupees a year to an 'officiating moulvie, Hajee Ahmed' to look after and preach in a mosque for the sepoys.[209] But if this was precisely the kind of collusion with 'heathenism' that evangelicals such as Brigadier Mackenzie despised, the fact is that it happened – and happened for sound administrative reasons.

In addition to the account of the refused fiscal exchange between the *faqīr* and Resident Davidson, there is considerable circumstantial evidence to place Afzal Shāh in this capacity of regimental maulvi. In several places in *Afzal al-karāmāt*, Afzal Shāh was referred to as the *pīr-pādrī* of the

sepoys, so adopting the Anglo-Indian term 'padre' to present him as the Muslim counterpart of Murphy, the Irish chaplain at Bolarum.[210] With his formal training in jurisprudence and his practical legal expertise, Afzal Shāh's work as a *qāzī* in his office at the cantonment at Hanamkonda coheres precisely with the duties expected of the regimental maulvi in overseeing the legal declarations of terms of service, oaths of allegiance and the quotidian matters of payment and leave-taking. Given the typical illiteracy of the Indian soldiery in the mid-nineteenth century, Afzal Shāh's bureaucratic role also reflected those of the interpreting dubashes and letter-writers who similarly oiled the machinery of colonial power.[211] The account we have heard of Afzal Shāh instructing his sepoy followers in reading the poetry of Hāfiz similarly reflects one of the other main duties of the regimental maulvi in teaching soldiers to read and write Persian, an occupation that particularly grew in importance after 1827, when promotion to the native officer ranks required literacy in either Persian or Hindi.[212] As for those British officials who chose to study Persian in the pursuit of such rank, the 'classical' poetry of Hāfiz stood at the heart of the Indian curriculum. As the Persian examination papers from the East India College at Haileybury in the 1830s show all too clearly, a grounding in the Persian 'classics' was what was seen to turn an English gentleman into an Indian officer; and in turn he expected no less of the Indian native officers beneath him.[213] Yet, the effects of reading such poetry were unpredictable, and, as we have seen in the story of the sepoy Muhammad Khān, who abandoned his regiment in a state of distraction following his lessons on Hāfiz, they could not always be guaranteed to advance a soldier's career, for poetry and stories were volatile and affective agents in their own right.

In its inconsistency with the paradigms of nationalist historiography, this ambiguity of cultural status and loyalty seems to characterise the fellowship and activities of Afzal Shāh in general. For while protecting his sepoy followers from the perils of disease and travel, and ensuring their reinstatement following different misdemeanours, Afzal Shāh was in a very real sense the miraculous apotheosis of the regimental maulvi. He was, *ipso facto*, the servant of both the sepoys and their officers. As we have seen, he could at the same time be connected to a revolt against the military authorities and to the protection of the soldiers through whom the British exerted their power in India. Little wonder that Resident Davidson is said to have recognised the value of having Afzal Shāh onside.

Given what we have seen about the role of the soldiers of the Contingent in the establishment and dissemination of Afzal Shāh's cult during his lifetime and in the construction of a fine stone mausoleum after his death, it is clear that his prominence, prestige and livelihood were all owed to his relationship with the Contingent. While much of the evidence places the

faqīr in the capacity of what the British chose to dub the 'regimental maulvi', how official this relationship was remains unclear. For *Afzal al-karāmāt* at least, written amid the heightened nationalist consciousness of the 1910s, Afzal Shāh visibly demonstrated his independence from the British by overseeing a rebellion and (in a colonial reworking of medieval Persian tales of the saint and the sultan) by refusing the largesse of the Resident. In its appearance in *Afzal al-karāmāt* some sixty years after Afzal Shāh's death, the story of the *faqīr*'s refusal of Resident Davidson's patronage was possibly a response to local claims that the 'padre' of Warangal and his genteel son and successor Sarwar Biyābānī owed their prominence to the white man and his army. And so, in its telling in *Afzal al-karāmāt*, the story of Bolarum – a soldiers' revolt instigated in all likelihood by the cancellation of their anticipated carnival – took on the shades of a new nationalist consciousness that had not existed in Afzal Shāh's lifetime. In the version of Indian history given in *Afzal al-karāmāt*, the sepoys' attachment to the carnivalesque traditions of Muharram was suppressed from the inside in favour of new readings of motive in the protection of 'national' liberty from the colonial oppressor. In a roundabout way, the perambulations of history had answered Mackenzie's wish of suppressing the saturnalia of the Hyderabadi sepoys' Islam.

3 Allah's naked rebels

> I will pretend to be a clown, because then they will understand me better.
>
> From the diary of Vaslav Nijinsky (1918)

Introduction

In the last chapter, we examined the career of a Muslim 'padre' among Hyderabad's sepoys in the middle years of the nineteenth century. In this chapter, the focus shifts from the Hanamkonda garrison in the east of the Nizam's territories to the larger cantonment beside the second city of the Nizam's State, to the west in Aurangabad. After Bolarum on the outskirts of Hyderabad, Aurangabad was the most important of the cantonment towns in which the forces of the Hyderabad Contingent were stationed under British command. In this sense, our shift of focus pursues the 'deployment' of barracks Islam along the cantonment network through which it was disseminated, for the *faqīr* examined in this chapter was himself a protégé of Afzal Shāh. While the latter's fame remained intact in the early twentieth century through the ongoing association of his son and successor Sarwar Biyābānī (d. 1331/1913) with the sepoys who continued to visit his father's shrine, the closer 'patrimonial' relationship that had evolved between Hyderabad and British India in the decades since Afzal Shāh's death in 1273/1856 had had a range of effects on the religious life of the sepoys. As we have seen in Chapter 2, through *Afzal al-karāmāt*'s composition around 1913, echoes of a new colonial consciousness can be detected in its biography of Afzal Shāh that point towards a new era in the relationship between Indians and Britons, which, in turn, demanded new forms of behaviour and changing patterns of social engagement. For all its theoretical independence, Hyderabad had effectively been colonised and absorbed into the 'informal empire' of the Princely States with the help of Afzal Shāh's sepoy followers and the Hyderabad Contingent had itself been incorporated into the larger Indian Army. Times had changed, and the *faqīrs* we meet in this chapter were very different figures to Afzal Shāh – more unpredictable, quixotic and

altogether seditious. The main *faqīr* we discuss in the following pages had none of the literate and legal training that lent Afzal Shāh respectability. He was, on the contrary, a *faqīr* in the literal sense – not a materially comfortable man, 'poor in spirit' like Afzal Shāh, but a poor and naked mendicant, albeit a mendicant who had once been a soldier in British service. He was Banē Miyān, the naked wanderer we met in the opening paragraph of the Introduction.

With little at stake in the colonial project, antinomian *faqīrs* like Banē Miyān possessed a kind of freedom that was unavailable to other Indians in the high era of empire. In the palatial realms of the Nizam and the Resident in Hyderabad, where the meeting of Mughal and British manners had resulted in the refinement of rituals of status to a degree of dazzling complexity, the smallest breaches of etiquette could have major political repercussions, with the simplest of slights cultivating years of ill will. But, at the other end of society, there existed individuals whose ethics consisted in turning the moral order of wider society on its head. These heterogeneous and often fiercely individualistic mendicants were known as *bē-sharʿ* – 'lawless' or 'outlaw' – *faqīrs*, and, while they existed long before the rise of British power, the emergence of colonial patterns of good order and respectability was to lend them a whole new set of conventions to defy.[1] As Hyderabad's elites were taking increasing care to properly button their tweeds and dinner jackets, the outlaw *faqīrs* remained free to flaunt their nakedness before the eyes of memsahib and mulla alike. And so as the cultural and religious forms of Hyderabad's elite were drawn into closer congruence with imperial categories and norms, around the cantonments in which the British gathered in the Deccan there appeared a series of lone, naked figures whose morality and manners championed everything that a good Englishman was taught to despise. Stoned on *bhāng* or opium, raving at the passing sahibs, lying lazy in the shade of a tree, bare of the merest strip of clothing and, as often as not, plainly diseased and scabby, the 'outlaw' *faqīr* represented the ultimate affront to Britain's civilising mission. In their public reversal of colonial values, such figures might have taken up with pride rather than shame the derisive dervish motto imputed by A. J. Arberry, the Sir Thomas Adams Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge: 'To live scandalously, to act impudently, to speak unintelligibly.'[2]

Any attempt to recover India's indigenous or ethnohistories must make room for such miraculous 'little men', while, at the same time, paying sufficient attention to the many gradations between attitudes of devotion and disregard that can avoid allowing the figure of the outlaw *faqīr* to once more fulfil its older Orientalist function of exoticising the Indian past.[3] In this sense, Banē Miyān presents an important case study

of a figure much maligned in both colonial and modern Islamic discourse, since his life history in the colonial limbo of princely Hyderabad is one that straddles the margins of the colonial and the non-colonial history of India. For Banē Miyān was a member of a small but significant group of individuals during this period whose careers encompassed a transformation from soldier to *faqīr*, from subaltern to saint. Using biographical works and official documentation alongside the oral history of his family, this chapter presents a textured biographical study of the life of one of the sepoy followers of Afzal Shāh who gave up his career for the life of a *faqīr*, before turning to the careers of two similar figures in order to examine the wider patterns that were expressed in Banē Miyān's life.

Reconstructions of a sepoy and *faqīr* life

As we have noted, by the end of the nineteenth century, Britain's influence in Hyderabad's affairs was considerably greater than it had been in mid-century, and, unsurprisingly, these developments were also expressed on the level of Hyderabad's military. In 1902, the Hyderabad Contingent was officially disbanded; and, though it retained its vernacular name of *kontinjant* throughout the Nizam's dominions, its regiments were now subsumed within the larger Indian Army with which Britain ruled over the subcontinent. The Contingent's stations in which we have seen Afzal Shāh's sepoy followers gathering – including the cantonment founded in Aurangabad in 1816 with the arrival of the first British officers there – were now formal outposts of empire. After the Contingent's absorption by the Indian Army, Aurangabad became the third military station (along with Bolarum and Secunderabad) at which Indian Army forces were positioned in the Nizam's territories.[4] So when our *faqīr* decided to spend his days lazing and raving around it's cantonment, it was a decidedly colonial space which he was transgressing, and, as we see below, one from which the colonial authorities repeatedly attempted to exclude him.

Although his given name was Muhammad Aʿzam Khān, it was by the name of Banē Miyān (literally, the noble or dear bridegroom) that this disorderly *faqīr* became known to his followers. He was born into a military family with a long tradition of service in the Contingent and, in the first stage of his career, was himself a sepoy. But the end of his service in the Contingent saw him transformed into a cannabis-smoking miracle-worker who regularly harangued the British in Aurangabad from the gutters as they passed. In comparison with his contemporary, the celebrated holy man Sāʾī Bābā of Shirdi (d. 1918), Banē Miyān has remained a figure of more local importance, whose fame declined as his soldierly

followers gradually deserted him in the decades after his death. But during the Nizams' period his fame spread at least as far as the capital at Hyderabad, probably through the same movement of soldiers that we have seen spreading the fame of Afzal Shāh before him.

According to an inscription on his mausoleum in Aurangabad, Banē Miyān was born in 1222/1808 in Hyderabad. However, this date is contradicted by the oral tradition of his descendants, who give his date of birth as 1234/1819. Despite these chronological uncertainties, it is known that his family had migrated to Hyderabad from the town of Shaykhupura in Punjab during the lifetime of the *faqīr*'s grandfather.[5] This ancestor, Muhammad Bahādur Khān, was later granted the order of the *farmān-e-khusrawī* (probably by Nizām Sikandar Jāh) for his services to the Contingent Army.[6] The family's move to the Deccan reflected a wider pattern of North Indian migration into Hyderabad State that helped fill the Nizam's civil administration as well as the Contingent in line with the broader role of the Indian Army in Punjabi migration both in India and overseas. Like many of the other 'Punjabi Mussulmans' who after Sikhs formed the backbone of the Indian Army, Banē Miyān's family were therefore associated with the British by way of employment in the Contingent. His father Muhammad Nūr Khān also served in the third regiment (*risāla*) of the Contingent's cavalry in Hyderabad.[7] Such father-to-son employment patterns were common in Hyderabad. In 1868, the Resident at Hyderabad Richard Temple described a meeting with a native officer in the Contingent cavalry who told him that places in the cavalry 'were almost hereditary, descending from father to son. His own father, he said, had been in the Contingent, and so was his son at that moment, making with himself three generations in the same service'.[8] It was while serving in the cavalry that Banē Miyān's father first heard of Afzal Shāh and so joined the many other sepoys from the Hanamkonda and Bolaram cantonments that we have seen gathering round him.

Several conflicting versions of the early life of Banē Miyān are extant, versions that eventually cohere with regard to the details of his later life in Aurangabad. The most important of these sources is the Urdu biographical text *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*, written in Aurangabad by the *faqīr*'s nephew Muhammad Ismāʿīl Khān (d. 1376/1956) shortly before or after his death in 1339/1921. The other version of his life belongs to the oral tradition of his family as transmitted through his other nephew Muʿīn al-dīn Khān, who in his youth knew the elderly Banē Miyān and was sixteen years old when Banē Miyān died.[9] It is this oral tradition that provides the more this-worldly account of Banē Miyān's early life, recording that, like his father, Banē Miyān joined the Contingent forces and served with them as a sergeant (*hawaldār*), before quitting military service to devote himself to

the *faqīr*'s life. Presenting a different perspective on Banē Miyān's later reputation as a great ecstatic, the oral tradition of his family recounts how Banē Miyān's English commanding officers thought that he had gone insane when he first manifested his states of ecstasy (*jazb*, *hāl*) and originally placed him in one of the growing number of asylums connected to the military in India.[10] Here Banē Miyān first appears in the guise of the soldier-ecstatics we have seen in the circle of Afzal Shāh in Chapter 2. Indian army records add credence to this version of Banē Miyān's early life, and several editions of the *Quarterly Indian Army List* from the 1880s refer to a 'Muhammad Azim Khan' serving in the 3rd Cavalry regiment of the Hyderabad Contingent during this time.[11] The date of the commission of this 'Muhammad Azim Khan' was February 1873, and records show that by the turn of the 1890s he was no longer in service. There are certainly problems with this identification. One of these is the English spelling of the name 'Azim', though this may have been the common alternative transliteration of Banē Miyān's name Aʿzam rather than a reference to the different name Aʿzīm. Of arguably greater significance is the fact that this figure was in the same regiment in the Contingent as Banē Miyān's father and served with the ranks of 'Jamedar' (*jamaʿdār*) and 'Risaldar' (*risāladār*), confirming the native officer class that is described in oral tradition.[12]

Ultimately, it remains unclear whether this figure was in fact Muhammad Aʿzam Khān 'Banē Miyān'. If it was, a number of questions are raised. The first of these concerns the *faqīr*'s date of birth, for taking the year of Muhammad Azim Khan's commission in 1873 as a guideline we can postulate that he was probably born during the early 1850s. While this conflicts with the traditional versions of Banē Miyān's date of birth in 1222/1808 or 1234/1819, it does cohere more convincingly with the unequivocal date of his death in 1339/1921, giving him a more credible life span of around seventy years as opposed to the more extraordinary ascription of an age of either 113 or 102 at his death. Attribution of age is a notoriously slippery subject, and the ascription of such longevity was a standard part of the reverential traditions surrounding Hindu holy men as well as Muslim *faqīrs*. In the nearby cantonment town of Poona in British India, for example, Banē Miyān's contemporary female ecstatic dervish (*majzūba*), Bābā Jān, was regarded as being 125 years old upon her death in 1350/1931.[13] A shorter life for Banē Miyān also has consequences with regard to his connection to his Muslim padre, Afzal Shāh, for it would mean that Banē Miyān was still only a child when Afzal Shāh died in 1273/1856. This, however, would explain why the only accounts to survive of their meeting in either the oral or textual traditions refer to Banē Miyān's introduction to Afzal Shāh as a child at the hands of his father,

Muhammad Nūr Khān, who was received as Afzal Shāh's disciple along with his son Banē Miyān and other family members.[14] In Afzal Shāh's biography, *Afzal al-karāmāt*, Banē Miyān attracted only a short paragraph in a long section describing the lives of several of Afzal Shāh's other followers, many of whom receive much more attention in the text. In the notice on Banē Miyān, the author Muhyī al-dīn noted that Banē Miyān came before Afzal Shāh with his father as a small child. Foreseeing his spiritual gifts, Afzal Shāh gave the child his nickname of 'Banē Miyān' by beckoning to him with the words 'Come, my little groom (*banē*).'[15] As we have seen in Chapter 2, as a means of passing on tradition between generations, such childhood and family initiations were commonplace at this time. In addition to the initiation of sepoy followers into the circle of Afzal Shāh, another local example is seen in the case of the important Hyderabad Sufi Habīb ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1323/1906), who was similarly introduced to his master Muhammad ʿAlī Khayrābādī through his father's devotion to the same figure.[16] In this way, Banē Miyān's father seems to have taken his wife and sons to receive initiation (*bayʿat*) at the hands of Afzal Shāh in the same manner that we have seen among other sepoys of the Contingent. Such cultic affiliation as part of family traditions passed from father to son, of an Islam concerned with the miraculous patronal protection of the young and weak more than with matters of religious or mystical instruction, would also in time be manifested in Banē Miyān's own career as a miraculous patron rather than a teacher. While it seems likely that Banē Miyān did only know Afzal Shāh as a child, and that he may have been born closer to 1850 than 1820, we must still be cautious in identifying him as the 'Muhammed Azim Khan' of the army records. For the latter figure rose to the highest rank of the native officer class, and, while it is temptingly attractive to posit Banē Miyān's fall from – or rejection of – these heights for the life of a guttersnipe, statistically it is much more likely that Banē Miyān was one of the many lower-ranking sepoys whose names have not been recorded. His life as a *faqīr* was in this sense a promotion from the anonymity of the army's lower ranks.

Evoked in the childhood name apparently given to Banē Miyān by Afzal Shāh is the word for a bridegroom (*bana*) that was often employed in its alternative usage as a term of endearment for young boys. The name carries nuances that are suggestive of youth or even childishness, as well the cockiness and effrontery that is expected of a young bridegroom. At the same time, the imagery of the bridegroom carried echoes in popular religiosity. The death anniversaries of the Muslim saints were celebrated as weddings (*ʿurs*), while near to Aurangabad at Khuldabad Muntajib al-dīn Zar Bakhsh (d. *c.* 709/1309) was better known to his local Hindu and Muslim devotees as Dūlhā Miyān ('the noble bridegroom').[17] Not

only does the *faqīr*'s nickname ring true with the account of his childhood meeting with Afzal Shāh, its continued use later in his life is also suggestive of the level of indulgence with which this 'holy fool' was treated by those around him. Regarded as God-given, the *faqīr*'s madness bestowed upon him a certain *Narrenfreiheit* or 'clown's license' that he was able to fully exploit in the cantonment and bazaars of Aurangabad. For all his apparent powerlessness, it was this quality that lent Banē Miyān his greatest power as a challenger of colonial notions of proper order in the very cantonment meant to represent the British vision of civilisation. Humour and foolishness thus worked for Banē Miyān as weapons of the weak. As the former Burmese police officer George Orwell wrote, 'Every white man's life in the East was one long struggle not to be laughed at.'[18]

In contrast to this image of Banē Miyān as a subaltern in the colonial army, the biography *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* (written *c.* 1921) provided Banē Miyān with a much more charismatic childhood and early life.[19] We are thus informed that when he was born during the fasting month of Ramazan, Banē Miyān refused to drink milk during the daylight hours and only accepted it after sunset; his evenings in the cradle were spent gazing at the light of a nearby lamp. There were no 'terrible twos' for this saintly infant, who was said to have never cried once and to have slept peacefully every night as a baby. When his cousin was sick, the infant Banē Miyān healed his fever by covering him with his own blanket.[20]

Here we are in the realm of the hagiographical strategem, for in his later *faqīr* years Banē Miyān's only occasional clothing was such a blanket, which here *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* hinted possessed the healing power of *barakat*. This stereotypical childhood echoed hagiographical tropes from the other end of the Muslim world, for the Moroccan *faqīr* Sīdī Hiddī (d. 1219/1804) was similarly regarded as being born as a saintly ecstatic (*majzūb*) before growing up like Banē Miyān a century later to lead the wandering life of an antinomian bachelor, indulging himself with cannabis and winning more renown for strange powers than piety.[21] As in similar biographical texts, when it came to representing the *faqīr*'s early life in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* the notion of sainthood (*wilāyat*) came with its own narrative requirements.[22] From Banē Miyān's keeping of the Ramazan fast during the first days after his birth onwards, *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* represented the *faqīr*'s early life as a juvenile reflection of the miracle tales that brought him fame in later decades. In literary terms, sainthood is thus a form of biographical censorship: the saint or *walī* is a narrative type of his own, rarely willing to share the bill with other types capable of diminishing his separation from the ordinary rules of the social world governing the existence of those around him. It is for this reason that *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* made no mention of Banē Miyān's early career as a soldier, instead solely presenting him as an infant



Figure 4 Banē Miyān, with gold-embroidered cloak, *c*. 1915.

recluse and miracle-worker. The effacing of Banē Miyān's early life in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* was the price that was paid for his later sainthood – his transformation through mausoleum and hagiography from the *faqīr*'s flesh to the typological immortality of the saint.[23]

As so often, biographical ends rewrote historical beginnings, and it is for this reason that the oral tradition of Banē Miyān's family is so important as a parallel source to *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*. What is startling about his otherwise formulaic saintly childhood is that it appears in a text that was written by Banē Miyān's nephew before or shortly after the *faqīr*'s death. Clearly, the cult of the living Banē Miyān was sufficiently robust to create such a miraculous childhood for a man who had either only recently died or (given that his death is not mentioned in the text) may even still have been alive. Mythification of this kind was, of course, all the more possible due to Banē Miyān's permanent state of raving ecstasy (*jazb*) – he was the last person anyone would ask for a coherent account of his own life. Surviving photographs show Banē Miyān naked and bewildered, echoing the impression given in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* of the *faqīr* as a playful but disturbing and disturbed man-child, a holy fool for the colonial era. The tradition of such fools had a much older history in the region, and (in literary form at least) the account of Banē Miyān's mental distraction carries close echoes of the biography of the early Urdu poet and *faqīr* of Aurangabad, Sirāj al-dīn Awrangābādī (d. 1177/1766) as recorded in the *Tuhfat al-shuʿarā* (1165/1751) of Afzal Bēg Khān Qaqshal.[24] Like Banē Miyān, Sirāj is said to have spent years in alternating states of joy and anguish, wandering naked in the Muslim shrines of nearby Khuldabad. But, unlike Banē Miyān, in his poems Sirāj left a body of writing from which we can reconstruct something of his own sense of self, however troubled. In the case of Banē Miyān, we can only see his madness through the biographical gaze of others.

Due to the hazy chronology of his early life, the date of Banē Miyān's arrival in Aurangabad remains unclear, and no details of his relocation from Hyderabad appear in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*. After its short account of his childhood, the text settles down to the chain of closely observed accounts of Banē Miyān's doings in Aurangabad that echo the similarly ethnographically rich narratives of the *Malfūzāt-e-Naqshbandiyya*, written almost two centuries earlier in honour of Shāh Palangposh, the militant *faqīr* companion of the Mughal armies of the Deccan.[25] The oral tradition of Banē Miyān's family claims that he arrived in Aurangabad after leaving the Hyderabad Contingent on the death of Afzal Shāh in 1273/1856. According to the family chronology of his life, Banē Miyān was around thirty-seven years old by this time, though, as we have seen, it is unclear how reliable this chronology. It is more likely that he was still a child at the time of Afzal Shāh's death and that his years treading in his father's footsteps in the Contingent should be dated to the 1860s and 1870s. The only certain date available is found in surviving official documents kept by Banē Miyān's family dating to the 1920s which

record that in 1309/1891 the Nizam Mahbūb ʿAlī Khān granted an income of 15 rupees per month for Banē Miyān's food and drink (*khūr wa nūsh*), showing that he was already living the *faqīr* life by this date.[26] Even if we cannot rely on the specific identification of Muhammad Aʿzam Khān with the 'Muhammad Azim Khan' of the Indian army records, it remains clear from the oral tradition of Banē Miyān's family that his early life was spent in a military environment that reflected the connections of Afzal Shāh with the soldiers of the Hyderabad Contingent.

Banē Miyān lived in Aurangabad in the company of his two sepoy brothers, Muhammad Mahmūd Khān and Muhammad Ibrāhīm Khān, and it is only reasonable to suggest that Banē Miyān and his sepoy brothers were posted to Aurangabad on duty. The fact that the brother Muhammad Ibrāhīm Khān was also serving in the Contingent also makes it likely that the move to Aurangabad was due to Muhammad Ibrāhīm and/or Banē Miyān being stationed with the Contingent forces resident in Aurangabad's Cantonment, in line with the patterns of sepoy deployment seen in Chapter 2. His brothers' sons later played an important role in the foundation of his cult in Aurangabad during the years before and after his death, directing his unruly charisma into established models of religious authority and sanctity. Whenever Banē Miyān's own formal association with the Contingent ended – whether in the 1880s or beforehand – the narratives in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* show that his association with its Indian soldiers in Aurangabad continued. While it is only from around 1890 that Banē Miyān's switch from sepoy to *faqīr* can safely be dated, this is really a *terminus ante quem*: whether he left the Contingent in 1870 or 1880, he was definitely a *faqīr* by 1890.

Banē Miyān's constituency of sepoy followers echoed not only that of Afzal Shāh at Hanamkonda but also the gatherings of Indian soldiers at the older Muslim shrine of Shāh Nūr Hammāmī (d. 1104/1692) in Aurangabad. In the introduction to an Urdu recension of Shāh Nūr's biography written early in the twentieth century and taken from the earlier prosopographical text *Bahār ū khizān*, mention is made of the association between Shāh Nūr's shrine and the Contingent's soldiers, along with the observation that the area around the shrine on the outskirts of Aurangabad was known at the turn of the twentieth century as the Sepoys' Market (*sipāhī bāzār*).[27] Despite the chronological uncertainties of Banē Miyān's sepoy career before he took on the guise of a *faqīr*, its milieu is therefore clear enough. Through the career of his father, his brothers and himself, Banē Miyān was connected to the Hyderabad Contingent, whose sepoys were also gathering at the tomb of an older *faqīr* during Banē Miyān's years in Aurangabad. As in the case of Afzal Shāh, Banē Miyān's association with

the army was also one that was later maintained by his many followers from the Contingent.

The sepoy *faqīr* and his world

The stories that are told in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* present a contested provincial city divided into the two worlds of a colonial cantonment and a native district, the zones between which Banē Miyān moved freely as a wandering beggar. This movement was in itself notable, demonstrating a kind of freedom unknown even to the British in Aurangabad, who were discouraged from entering the old ('native') city by the Nizam's officials and eventually completely banned from even entering its dangerous alleyways.[28] As we see below, internal evidence in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* suggests that the events it describes occurred during the first two decades of the twentieth century, with a concentration on the years between 1915 and 1920. Whatever the obscurity of the early years of Banē Miyān's life, we can be fairly certain of the time and place in which the most celebrated events in his career occurred. These were two decades in which Aurangabad witnessed a sharp increase in the power of the British administration beyond the walls of their cantonment that was prompted by a series of floods, draughts and famines and by the sheltering of anti-British activists in Hyderabad.[29] In this way, *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* provides a kind of supernatural micro-history of its period, adding the seasoning of miracle to a historical cauldron already blending political insurrection with natural disaster. *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* is in this sense as much local history as hagiography, a subaltern's-eye view of social life in the early twentieth century on the military fringes of Britain's Indian empire.[30]

We should not make the mistake of seeing Aurangabad as a mirror of the colonial cities of British India, for, as the second city of Hyderabad State, its cultural and economic wealth lent it a distinct character of its own. One of the most vivid aspects of life in early twentieth-century Aurangabad to stand out from the pages of *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* is the degree to which the city remained a cosmopolitan centre of migration from many directions. The text contains scenes of Banē Miyān's encounters with a variety of people from different regional or ethnic groups. Some of these stories bear echoes of the tradition of the witty anecdote (*latīfa*) that was common in Urdu prose works of this period, spinning coarse jokes from the rough fibre of ethnic and regional stereotypes.[31] There is a story of an Arab scholar from Madina called Madanī Sahīb who resided for a long time in the 'big mosque' in Aurangabad's Juna ('Old') Bazaar. When he decided to marry a local orphan girl from a good family, his inability to

understand Urdu properly led his young wife to play all manner of tricks upon him. Eventually this led to his being chased through the city's streets by the local police (*pulis*), a force newly established in Hyderabad State after British models and headed by a series of British directors.[32] Running to Banē Miyān for help, the *faqīr* thwarted the authorities by miraculously helping Madanī Sāhib to escape unseen to his home. But a few miles south of the 'native' city through which Madanī Sāhib had fled lay the boundaries of the cantonment of the military officers and civil administrators who constituted the colonial presence in Aurangabad. The different moral and political order they represented stands out in the anecdotes of *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*, whose stories suggest a scenario of severely limited colonial influence in which the British were scarcely even capable of controlling events within their own zone of authority in the cantonment, let alone beyond it. Presented in this cheap and forgotten lithograph is a counter-history of empire, reversing a colonial master narrative of absolute control with a picture of the helpless efforts of individual Englishmen to regulate an environment which was at every step baffling and uncontainable. The cantonment appears not as a locus of power, as a colonial panopticon, but as a flimsy garrison, the gatekeepers of which could be outwitted by even a naked *faqīr*. The cantonment's masters are shown as jittery and unnerved, perplexed by Banē Miyān's constant ability to thwart them through the miracles he directed to his friends.

Aʿzam al-karāmāt recalls many episodes of Banē Miyān visiting the regimental or *risāla* bazaar in the cantonment, near to the Christ Church (founded in 1874) that was frequented by the 'native' Christians whose numbers in the city were growing through the evangelical conversion of sepoys and local outcastes. As in the case of Afzal Shāh, in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* we also hear the Indian soldiers referring to Banē Miyān as their *pādrī*, the term adapted in military Hindustani for the army chaplain or 'padre'.[33] Such meetings of the colonial Christian and Muslim worlds of Aurangabad recur throughout Banē Miyān's biography in which the *faqīr* either outwitted or, like his master Afzal Shāh before him, mysteriously manipulated colonial agency towards the assistance of his followers. In several episodes, Banē Miyān miraculously intervened to aid in the promotion of followers in their careers in Hyderabad's civil and military service, as when he helped Muhammad Mihrāb ʿAlī Khān to rise into the service of the pre-eminent Hyderabadi courtier family of the Pāēgāhs.[34] On another occasion he called out in the cantonment bazaar to an Indian private (*jawān*) in the Contingent, addressing him in the superior ranks of a native commander-of-horse (*dafaʿdār*). While the private corrected Banē Miyān's mistake, he was astonished when later that day he was singled out

for promotion by 'Major-Colonel' Ross.[35] This latter figure appears to have been the British officer Colonel Harry Ross (1869–1938), who, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, was the chief officer at the regional Indian Army headquarters that was located at Ahmadnagar in British India, somewhat to the south of Aurangabad.[36] Since the Contingent had been absorbed into the Indian Army in 1902, the sepoys and officers in Aurangabad's cantonment now lay under the jurisdiction of their superiors in Ahmadnagar, in whose great pre-Mughal fortress such political prisoners as Jawaharlal Nehru would later be confined.

Colonel Harry Ross visited Aurangabad many times during the 1900s and 1910s and would have been present on these occasions in the city's cantonment, just as he is described in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*. Given Ross's high rank and authority, his visits to Aurangabad would have been greeted in the cantonment with the mixture of fanfare and due seriousness that so characterised the life of colonial officialdom and, as such, would have been occasions of some note. Written a couple of years after Ross was posted elsewhere in 1918, *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* played on the recent memory of his visits to add to Banē Miyān's reputation. If 'Major-Colonel Ross' represented the power of the British, then the suggestion of Banē Miyān's ability to mysteriously induce him into promoting an Indian private represented a radical reclaiming of jurisdiction over the city's inhabitants. In view of Banē Miyān's own army career, it also represented the use of the miraculous tale to expunge the memory of the chain of command in which Banē Miyān was earlier placed beneath Ross's officer class in the Contingent. At the same time it reversed power relations on a personal and a metaphysical level.

In another episode, Banē Miyān's miraculous powers impressed the cantonment's British Bazaar Master so much that thereafter he greeted the *faqīr* whenever he saw him, despite the fact that the police had previously reported to him on Banē Miyān's unruly presence at the cantonment opium shop.[37] Numerous other episodes took place in the cantonment's *risāla bāzār*, which Banē Miyān liked to frequent in his bullock cart (*bandī*) so as to call out to passing soldiers and occasionally harangue the otherwise orderly district's administrators.[38] The bazaar was also the favoured site for the evangelical efforts of the Church Missionary Society representative Henry Smith (d. 1938), who between 1902 and 1918 led public sermons and other preaching efforts there as part of his lacklustre mission to convert the Aurangabad Muslims.[39] Amid the imperious efforts of missionaries and administrators, Banē Miyān was an unruly presence in the cantonment bazaar, a colonial heir to the antinomian traditions of the earlier *qalandars* and other anti-social *faqīrs*.[40] Such *faqīrs* were men of power, men endowed with *barakat*

whom one upset at one's peril. We would not be far wrong to think of Banē Miyān as a kind of supernatural *goonda*, a wise guy.

In Chapter 2, we have seen that these ecstatic *majzūbs* held long connections with India's soldiers, and the British officers in Aurangabad had reason to be wary (as well as no doubt weary) of Banē Miyān's presence in their cantonment. Despite the efforts to control him that we discuss below, the cantonment administrators had to reckon with the religious status he embodied. For *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* also records that Banē Miyān's kinship group (*qawm*) was that of shaykh, a position of hereditary religious respect to which it added the extra dignity of ancestors who were famous for learned Friday sermons back in their Punjabi homeland before they turned sepoy.[41] It is possible that such rumours of Banē Miyān's hereditary status may have lent him a certain safeguard. For one colonial primer on Indian soldiering warned British officers with regard to the influence of the Qurēshīs (that is, descendants of the Prophet's tribe, who comprised another kinship group of religious standing among the 'Punjabi Mussulmans'), that since a Qurēshī automatically commanded great influence among his fellow soldiers he should be won over whenever possible, because 'if he pulls the wrong way it is the very devil'.[42] While we see below that Banē Miyān was temporarily incarcerated by the colonial authorities, in the end he was left free to roam the cantonment at his unruly liberty.

Aside from Banē Miyān's activities among the sepoys, there are numerous other episodes in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* that relate to his powers of curing disease, summoning rain and dealing with incidents of theft. While such occurrences are a standby of the saintly narrative in India, the context in which the text was written added a particular urgency to these stories and the hopes and anxieties on which they fed. For in the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries, the Nizam's State witnessed a series of catastrophic droughts along with the famine and diseases that followed them. Aurangabad was particularly badly affected by famines in 1899–1900, 1918 and (most severely of all) in 1920, the latter famine occurring shortly before the probable date of publication of *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* in 1921. Statistics show that during these periods of famine incidents of theft and banditry surged dramatically, no doubt adding a sense of moral panic to the daily visceral terror inflicted by these truly horrific famines. Compared to an annual average of around thirty recorded violent robberies in the Aurangabad region, the year 1899–1900 witnessed 233 incidents, while the other famine year of 1920–1 witnessed 125.[43] In its introductory section, *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* made reference to 'these terrible times' (*āshūb zamān*), using a phrase that carried great resonance from the Urdu tradition of literary elegies of urban

degeneration (*Shahr āshūb*).[44] Far from summoning fanciful or merely stereotypical scenarios, several of the miraculous stories in the text thus related to very real situations, including a number of stories connected with the severe outbreak of plague that occurred in Aurangabad and elsewhere in the Nizam's State between 1915 and 1916, during which 54,179 deaths were recorded.[45] The missionary Henry Smith described the state of Aurangabad during this epidemic in one of his pamphlets, depicting the city as virtually uninhabited due to the fact that so many people had left their homes to camp in tents or huts in the open country.[46] This description reflected an official policy of plague control through mass evacuation dictated by the colonial authorities.[47] In his unpublished memoirs, Colonel Harry Ross described his own experiences as Plague Officer further south in Bijapur, where evacuating the inhabitants of villages into bivouacs in the fields formed his main strategy of control.[48] Given the harsh side effects of such policies, and their disruptive effect on social and economic life, the British response to the plague epidemic came under virulent attack in the vernacular press throughout western India, adding further grist to the mill of the independence movement throughout Marathwada (where Aurangabad was located) and in the neighbouring Bombay Presidency. Responding to such discontent, the Salvation Army became one of numerous missionary organisations which tried to help victims of the plague in British India by working in the Poona cantonment to the west of Aurangabad.[49]

Banē Miyān had a rather different response to the epidemic. One of the stories in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* is of particular interest here in showing local attempts to subvert the colonial reaction to such calamities. On his way to visit Banē Miyān during an outbreak of plague, one of the *faqīr's* followers was forced into quarantine along with other travellers rounded up at Aurangabad's railway station, a practice that was common enough in the wake of the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897.[50] But for all the power of official regulations, the *faqīr* was able to miraculously intervene and soften the heart of the British doctor on plague duty and have him release his follower.[51] Being placed in quarantine was clearly regarded by locals as a form of detention by the colonial authorities, while in terms of protection from the plague itself the quarantine regulations enforced by the British were seen by many Indians as being less effective than a visit to a *faqīr* protector. Interestingly, one of the stories associated with the evangelical army chaplain Henry Martyn (1781–1812) pursued a similar pattern, recounting the occasion on which Martyn's Indian servant was arrested by a *kōtwāl* or local constable, to which event the Christian padre responded by rushing to ensure his servant's release.[52] If Martyn's deed was not a supernatural one like that of Banē Miyān, we still see the

same expectation which Indian soldiers brought to their padres, Christian or Muslim, that the role of the chaplain was as the defender of his protégées. If Banē Miyān's miraculous intercession did constitute a kind of 'resistance', here at least it was of a discreet kind.

The quarantine episode has a wider resonance with other colonial contexts, and it is perhaps worth comparing Banē Miyān's invisible opposition to the plague duty doctor with the fate of France's colonial physician Emile Mauchamp, who was murdered by a mob in Marrakech in 1907. After his death, Mauchamp became widely revered as a martyr to the French *mission civilisatrice* in Morocco, a promotion brought about not only by his death but also by the contrast offered between his own work in promoting modern medicine in the protectorate and the bedevilled image of traditional Moroccan medicine that Mauchamp described in his other career as an ethnographer.[53] 'Sacrifice' and 'resistance' thus created heroes for Europeans and Indians.

The sepoy, his drugs and his madness

However, the central episode in Banē Miyān's career in which his subversion of colonial authority is demonstrated is the story of his escape from the colonial asylum. According to the oral tradition of his family, while serving in the Contingent Banē Miyān underwent a state of ecstatic 'attraction' (*jazb*) towards God. On seeing his raving and abstracted condition, his British superiors concluded that he had gone insane and, as a result, placed him into an asylum. But Banē Miyān's new-found intimacy with God brought with it miraculous powers, and in spite of his incarceration in a small cell he was able to inexplicably escape. A version of this story is also recorded in his biography, *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*, showing that his association with the colonial asylum dates back to at least the last year of his life when the book was published and probably to actual events some years earlier.

It is worth quoting this short account in full:

> One day with the help of the [British] Bazaar Master, the Cantonment Magistrate of Aurangabad had Banē Miyān taken by bullock cart to the asylum by some soldiers of the regiment. They took him to the house of the superintendent of the asylum [*pāgalkhāna*] and left him there. But after sunset a number of people saw Banē Miyān entering the shop of an opium dealer in the cantonment's regimental bazaar in Aurangabad and so the police immediately informed the Bazaar Master what had happened. In the morning the Bazaar Master came and asked the soldiers why they hadn't deposited their padre [*pādrī*] with the superintendent. 'But sir,' they replied, 'We did take him to the superintendent's house!' The Bazaar Master then ordered them to take Banē Miyān by cart and deliver him directly into the care of the superintendent and bring back a receipt. Just then the soldiers

saw Banē Miyān in front of the cart and so carried him away in it to the asylum in Jalna, where they delivered him to the superintendent's house, handed him over and took a receipt. In the morning, once again all the people saw Banē Miyān back in the same bazaar in the same opium shop. And so once again they informed the Bazaar Master, who was amazed because he had the receipt confirming Banē Miyān's arrival at the asylum. So the Bazaar Master set off to see the truth of the matter for himself and saw Banē Miyān there in the bazaar with his own eyes. He exclaimed, 'Undoubtedly, you are a great Muslim padre [*pīr-pādrī*]', then lifted his hat in respect to salaam Banē Miyān. After that he would sometimes go to Banē Miyān to pay his respects.[54]

In addition to providing a tale of subaltern defiance, it is clear that the author of *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* was turning this account of Banē Miyān's incarceration towards hagiographical ends. When combined with the oral tradition of Banē Miyān's family, the account points towards a number of important but neglected transformations in Indian society in which the colonial army played a central role. As we have seen in Chapter 2, as early as 1795 the problem of the 'mad' sepoy had led to the foundation of a sepoy asylum in Monghyr in Bihar.[55] In the decades after the passing of new legislation in Calcutta in 1858, followed by the Criminal Procedure Code of 1861 which provided legal classification of the criminally insane, the colonial asylum system began to expand further, even though the Asylums Act of 1858 had attempted to restrict entry to the 'native only' asylums to violent or criminal 'lunatics'.[56] Over the following two decades, more than twenty-five native-only asylums were founded in the different cities of India. These institutions served as practical experiments in the implementation of new medical ideologies concerning the causes of insanity. Cures were sought through regimens of cold baths and bowel-opening purgatives, regular corrective labour and the brutal 'medicine' of blistering the penis to cure the moral depravity of masturbation.[57] In this way, in colonial medical discourse the mad became quickly aligned with the bad, such that even if not expressed through illegal criminal activity, madness was symptomatic of underlying moral degeneration. What we see here was a fundamental epistemic collision between meanings of madness that were based on the evolution in Asia and Europe of the distinct social attitudes, practices and institutions for the mentally and socially deviant.[58]

The genealogy of mental pathology in Victorian British through ideas of social reform and the earlier Enlightenment ideology of reason lent colonial medicine a complex politico-cultural agenda based on an ingrained bourgeois association between work and morality on the one hand and notions of self-control based on the characteristically British formulation of 'common sense' on the other. In India, particularly in regions like the

Nizam's State with long-standing exposure to Islamic traditions, madness possessed a wider range of meanings, each with a no-less-distinct genealogy of its own. Drawing on the classical Gallenic tradition, the Muslim medical tradition of 'Greek medicine' or *yūnānī tibb* in India (which was promoted heavily in the late nineteenth century by the sixth Nizam, Mahbūb ʿAlī Khān), could present physiological causes for insanity.[59] At the same time, an earlier pre-Islamic Arab legacy presented madness as the result of possession by a spirit or 'genie' (*jinī*) so as to render the victim 'jinned' (*junūn, majnūn*). In India, this idiom of possession fused with local demonological traditions that have remained influential to the present day.[60] Finally, drawing on a specifically Islamic notion of the soul's innate 'attraction' (*jazb*) towards its creator, certain expressions of madness could also be interpreted theologically as proof of an individual's special intimacy with God. Such figures were regarded as *majzūbs*, persons whose state of permanent and enraptured 'closeness' (*qurbat*) or attraction (*jazb*) to God rendered them ideal intercessors and workers of wonders. As such, their every transgression was permissible, since it was necessarily committed through divine dispensation.

These multiple possibilities for the diagnosis of deviant behaviour show the social complexity of madness in an Indo-Islamic setting. For symptoms needed to be properly identified in order to decide whether a person was physically sick, possessed by devils or elected as a friend of God. Given this range of meanings and the fact that the symptoms of madness were highly ambiguous, different diagnoses bore the variant possibilities of stigma or esteem. Subsequently, in the case of Banē Miyān, his nephew and biographer Ismāʿīl Khān went to considerable length in the introduction to *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* to ensure that his local readers (who would have known Banē Miyān's antics at first hand) understood that he behaved in this way because he was a *majzūb* and, as such, was divinely licensed to do as he pleased.[61] He was 'enraptured' (*majzūb*) and not merely 'mad' (*pāgal*).

In such ways, the pathologies of colonial and Indo-Islamic medicine differed enormously in the range of meanings they were willing to ascribe to deviant minds and bodies. By the second half of the nineteenth century, this conflict of interpretations acquired institutional ramifications. The Indian 'insane' were no longer to be left to their own (or their kinsmen's) devices but could now be forcibly incarcerated in the new institution of the asylum.[62] There is nonetheless evidence of institutional competition between rival cures of madness. In India as elsewhere, certain Muslim shrines were associated with the cure of 'bad' madness. An example was the shrine of al-Khizr in the Palestinian village of the same name, a few miles outside Bethlehem, where, during the mandate period, British officials founded a mental hospital to treat the traditional

patients of the shrine in 'modern' ways.[63] In the life of Banē Miyān, we see the ramifications of this clash of pathologies played out. While for the British his condition meant that he needed to be confined to the asylum, for his Indian followers his deviancy was evidence of a status that led to his veneration in life and to his sanctification in death with the creation of a shrine around his grave. What greater symbol could there be of the difference between the colonial and anti-colonial visions of the world than the contrast between the flower-laden shrine and the cold comforts of the asylum?

On the evidence available, it is difficult to judge where or how many times (and, if we are truly sceptical, whether at all) Banē Miyān was incarcerated. The *Hyderabad State Gazetteer* of 1909 claimed that there was no asylum in Hyderabad, though it did note that there was accommodation for lunatics in the Hyderabad central gaol. In 1891, the gaol contained thirty-six 'lunatics', a figure which within a decade had risen to 130.[64] However during the decades in which the fertile Hyderabadi province of Berar fell under British administration as a result of Hyderabad's debt crisis (itself fuelled by the costs of the Contingent), an asylum was set up there in the town of Amraoti. Rebuilt in 1878, the Amraoti asylum received Indian 'insanes' from all across the Nizam's State, sometimes including sepoys serving in the Contingent.[65] In 1884, a decision was taken by the British Resident in Hyderabad to close the Amraoti asylum and instead send Hyderabadi 'insanes' to the larger asylum at Nagpur in British India, which at this time was being connected to Hyderabad by rail.[66] There was also an asylum located in Hyderabad's neighbouring cantonment district of Secunderabad, which was neglected in the Hyderabad Gazetteer due to the fact that with its location in Secunderabad it fell under the jurisdiction of the British rather than the Nizam, whose institutions the Gazetteer solely described.[67] This 'Lunatic Asylum' was clearly marked on an official map of the cantonments at Secunderabad and Bolarum from 1901, where it stood in the appropriate position between the Poor House and the Civil Hospital.[68]

The records of the asylums in the neighbouring Bombay Presidency demonstrate the ways in which the new scientific category of insanity was targeted at particular sections of Indian society. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the predominant occupation listed for Europeans confined in the whites' asylums was that of 'soldier'. While in some years a significant minority occupation among the Indian patients was similarly that of 'sepoy',[69] among the Indians listed in the 'native only' asylums of the Bombay Presidency in the annual reports up to 1900, the predominant occupation recorded was that of 'beggar, mendicant, fakir, etc'.[70] In 1881, for example, some fifty 'beggars, mendicants, and fakirs' were confined in the asylums of the

Presidency, a figure that gradually rose over the coming years.[71] By 1895, there were seventy-one 'beggars, fukeers, mendicants, and paupers'.[72] The number of inmates listed for the next category of Indians ('no occupation') was thirty-five, followed by some thirty-one Indian inmates registered as 'merchants'.[73] What these data demonstrate is the use of the asylum in a colonial anti-vagrant policy of clearing the streets of 'insane' mendicants. Given the failure to establish a Vagrancy Act in India during the early 1840s, the use for this purpose several decades later of the respectably scientific and 'non-political' discourse of medicine was all the more effective.[74] Caught in the midst of this unofficial policy of clearing the streets were considerable numbers of *faqīrs*. What were to many Indians wandering holy men, begging and openly smoking cannabis in accordance with long-established custom, were in the gaze of colonial officialdom seen instead as a public nuisance that needed to be controlled.[75] As we have noted from the narrative in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* concerning Banē Miyān's detention, such *faqīrs* could be locked away in the asylum by the Cantonment Magistrate's order.

In order to better understand the possible motivations behind Banē Miyān's confinement, it is useful to turn towards the regulations that governed the Cantonment Magistrate (or 'CM' in colonial parlance) who locked the *faqīr* away, since for all his importance as the strong arm of empire at ground level the CM has been curiously neglected by historians. Here we can turn for evidence towards *The Cantonment Magistrate's Manual* which was published in Calcutta in 1890 as a semi-official guide to the duties and discretions of the CM.[76] Although CM personnel were almost always drawn from among the officers of the Indian Army, the CM's powers were, in practice, a blend of the civil and military. His work ranged from overseeing sanitation, collecting land revenue and maintaining the roads to controlling the cantonment bazaars, running its 'lock hospital' (a confined hospital originally used to quarantine syphilitics) and ensuring the implementation of the Indian Penal Code.[77] A good proportion of his time was also spent in regulating the sale and use of drugs and alcohol (both among Indians and Europeans residing in the cantonment) and in dealing with the disorderly conduct associated with their misuse.[78] From this survey of the CM's duties, it is clear that Banē Miyān would have attracted his attention on several counts, from his disorderly presence in the bazaar with his diseased and scabby flesh to his public use of drugs within the cantonment and the CM's control over the lock hospital in which the diseased or insane could be detained. The lock hospitals form one of the more interesting – and insidious – dimensions to colonial policies of public hygiene, for the CM had the authority to send a variety of persons – particularly prostitutes afflicted with venereal

disease – to the lock hospital for treatment, which, though in theory voluntary, was often enforced at the CM's discretion.[79] Reflecting their origins in the confinement of syphilitics, lock hospitals were also used for the temporary confinement of 'insanes', and it is possible that it was in such a cantonment institution that Banē Miyān was confined. It would be too much to speculate that his own madness was due to syphilis, but the disease's connections to the colonial soldier (and the authorities' attempts to control it) were clearly seen in the prominent place of lock hospitals in India's military cantonments. However, the spread of the native asylum system meant that the CM's preferred option in dealing with a problematic 'insane' was to dispatch them to a formal asylum whenever possible. The *Cantonment Magistrate's Manual* provided extensive advice on this matter, noting with regard to the authority over madmen that 'every Darogah and Police Officer shall arrest all wandering lunatics and send them before a Magte [Magistrate]. The Magte and M.O. [Medical Officer] shall examine such a person, and if satisfied that he is a lunatic shall send him to the nearest asylum.'[80] While any such lunatic's friends or family could apply in writing to look after him, if it was brought to the CM's attention that they were failing to do so and that the lunatic was breaching the peace, then the CM had the authority to jail the lunatic's keeper for a month as well as to send the lunatic to an asylum. Even in cases where insanity was uncertain, the CM was able to detain a suspected madman for ten days for assessment of his state of mind.[81] On this basis, it is clear that the CM described in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* had a number of options in dealing with Banē Miyān, several of which included the resort to enforced detention as described in the text. But the CM manual also gives us a sense of Banē Miyān's achievement in outwitting the CM that is celebrated in his biography. For the manual tells us that the magistrate 'may perhaps be respected and feared, but he can never be cordially liked', later recommending that 'he should reign with a benevolent but absolute despotism'.[82] If this were the case, then Banē Miyān's ability to not only thwart the CM but to ultimately make the CM salute him represented a considerable victory for the naked Indian over the senior representative of the British Empire in Aurangabad.

Such 'political' resistance of *faqīrs* was by no means confined to India. In Banē Miyān's lifetime, the 'dervish' army of the millenarian Mahdī of Sudan and the Sufi militia of Naqshbandī initiates led by Imām Shamīl that held at bay Russia's march into the Caucasus are merely the two most famous examples of organised Muslim ascetic resistance to European empire-building. As in the case of Banē Miyān, other expressions of ascetic resistance were more individualistic and small-scale. Nineteenth-century European travellers to Iran, for example,

frequently met with hostility from the *faqīrs* they encountered in the streets, public spaces that the *faqīrs* in a sense owned as the permanent residents of the urban outdoors. Crossing Iran in 1875, the British traveller Arthur Arnold was regularly threatened and cursed by *faqīrs*, whose clown's freedom served a role of increasing political importance as both Iranian and Indian elites entered alliances with the European powers.[83] The *faqīr*, whose religious status and time-honoured freedoms lent him a considerable degree of free expression, was emerging as quite literally the voice of the Muslim 'street'. Unable to intervene in religious matters by explicit dint of colonial policy, the British in India thus faced a perplexing dilemma in the insulting antics of such figures as Banē Miyān, taunting them more or less freely as they passed in the streets. And it was here that the new laws on insanity and vagrancy proved useful. For if the *faqīr*'s activities could not be prohibited so long as they were regarded as part of the autonomous sphere of 'religion' – which the British were compelled to at least make a show of respect for after the Sepoy Rebellion – the problem of silencing the *faqīr* altogether disappeared if his deeds could instead be classified as those of a madman. The import of the *faqīr*'s reckless jeers, his nakedness and his open drug-use were for these reasons reinterpreted in official policy as signs of his insanity and his 'anti-social' character. Given the widespread perception of the role of *faqīrs* in the uprisings of 1857, the expanded role of the asylum was therefore one of several ways in which these unruly agitators were controlled. By these means, the social meaning of the *faqīr* was reversed: his activities were no longer evidence of *jazb*, of sweet intoxication in God's presence, but proof instead of insanity.

As in the story from *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* that juxtaposed Banē Miyān between the opium shop and the asylum, the use of cannabis was central to this process, echoing Banē Miyān's regular use of the drug no less than the importance lent to *gānjā* and *bhāng* as a purported cause of insanity in the asylum reports. As in the menace presented to Parisian society by Charles Baudelaire in the 1840s and 50s, with his debauched *hachichins* and 'obscene' verse, there is in this colonial discourse a sense of legal and moral confoundment at this new mode of intoxication, so far detached from the beer and whisky-soda of the European clubs and barracks in India. We can easily imagine the impression made by the drugged and dirty *faqīrs* on the British. In the chapter on the abuse of cannabis in the 1893 colonial *Report on the Cultivation and Use of Gánjá*, we read how 'by means of considerable doses of *bhang* frequently repeated, [mendicants] induce a condition of frenzy which is supposed to indicate supernatural "possession".'[84] Such 'frenzy' was at times characteristic of Banē Miyān, whose devotees were well aware of his occasional condition of wrathful

majesty or *jalāl*, his 'mania' in the new lexicon of the asylum. (Such manic fury was precisely the characteristic of many of the warrior *faqīrs* of pre-colonial India.) For the colonial administrators of Aurangabad's cantonment, where so many of Banē Miyān's disruptive street performances took place, the former sepoy was already a familiar type and, moreover, one whose place in the asylum was already established by previous admissions policy. Order needed to be maintained: whatever 'superstitions' the locals might attach to these figures, the streets where sahibs walked had to be free from the haranguing of intoxicated beggars. In effect, in spite of an official policy of religious toleration, through the colonial discourse of insanity and its institutional expression in the asylum, even in the 'independent' state of Hyderabad the *faqīr*'s lifestyle was gradually criminalised by stealth. Coupled with wider colonial attitudes towards disparaging the 'idle' naked mendicant, such policies carried a clear moral message of self-restraint and sobriety that would also find echo in the new bourgeois religious movements that flourished under colonial rule. While the *faqīr*'s métier would certainly outlive the Raj, new limitations on his public role were now established.[85] From the asylums in the Bombay Presidency and at Nagpur in the Central Provinces, and those at Amraoti and Secunderabad in the Nizam's State, colonial asylum practices began to penetrate princely Hyderabad. Even in the Nizam's own gaols, rapidly increasing numbers of 'lunatics' were detained in the last decade of the nineteenth century. By 1901, only a fifth of the lunatics incarcerated were classified as *criminally* insane.[86] In Hyderabad, madness was losing its traditional meanings, and the mad were falling into the hands of the state and its new force of policemen, itself based on colonial prototypes and headed by a series of British directors – Inspectors Ludlow, Hankin and Gayer – before the appointment of Hyderabad's first Indian inspector in the 1930s.[87]

Alongside the oral tradition of Banē Miyān's family, the clearest evidence we have for his own confinement is the description we have quoted from *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* of his incarceration at the 'mad-house' (*pāgalkhāna*) at Jalna, some 60 miles to the east of Aurangabad. This information suggests several things. First, since Jalna was also one of the six cantonment towns of the Contingent in the Nizam's territories, it appears that Banē Miyān was incarcerated in a colonial asylum located inside a military cantonment rather than in one of the Nizam's institutions, such as the gaol in Aurangabad with its accommodation for 2,000 inmates or the Central Gaol of Hyderabad with its large numbers of 'insanes'.[88] This seems to be corroborated by the fact that in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* we are told that Banē Miyān was transported to Jalna by a detachment of sepoys under British command. Since the means and

location of Banē Miyān's incarceration were so closely associated with the Contingent rather than the Nizam's police (who we have seen appearing separately in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* in the story of Madanī Sāhib), this in turn points towards the likelihood that the Contingent's authorities regarded Banē Miyān as one of their own. The fact that most of the episodes concerning Banē Miyān take place within the cantonment rather than the old city of Aurangabad suggest that the barracks and the soldiers' bazaars retained their attraction for Banē Miyān long after he had left or been dismissed from military service. In reflection of wider colonial policy, as a 'mad sepoy' Banē Miyān was regarded as a smear on the army's reputation and found himself in confinement as a consequence.[89]

Although Banē Miyān lived in the Nizam's State, the fact that many of his activities were carried out in Aurangabad's cantonment meant that any offence he committed fell under the legal jurisdiction of the Government of India and not the Nizam's Government.[90] By dint of having formerly served in the Contingent, he was doubly liable to punishment by the commanders of the Contingent itself rather than by the Nizam's legal system.[91] Among the new categories of legal offence that were applied to the administration of the cantonments of the Nizam's State was that of 'breach of the peace'.[92] *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*'s account of the British cantonment magistrate sending Banē Miyān under supervision to the 'madhouse' in Jalna thus reflected the administrative and legal realities of cantonment life. Whatever we surmise about the conditions of Banē Miyān's release or escape from confinement, what evidence we have suggests that, like other sepoys elsewhere, he was confined by the colonial authorities due to the embarrassment his behaviour caused to his former regiment. Since Jalna was abandoned by the British in 1903 as part of the Contingent's restructuring, we also have a *terminus ante quem* for Banē Miyān's time in the asylum, (which may itself have occurred either before or after he left the Contingent).[93] Since we have already established the likelihood that his *faqīr* reputation evolved through his activities between *c*. 1890 and his death in 1921, his confinement may have occurred during the 1880s, a decade in which the number of detainments of 'insanes' rose considerably right across India's asylums. While Jalna was directly named in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* as the location of the 'mad house' to which Banē Miyān was sent, we cannot rule out the additional possibility of his confinement in the Secunderabad, Amraoti or Nagpur asylums, which received patients from all across the Nizam's State. While the tabulated data contained in the *Annual Administration and Progress Reports on the Insane Asylums* do not contain the names of patients, the reports do show the presence of a considerable body of sepoys and 'fakirs'. Whether or not Banē Miyān was among them can never be established

beyond doubt, but what is clear is that in his insanity he was by no means the only *faqīr* or sepoy to be subject to the new apparatus and treatment of the colonial asylum.

The nature of Banē Miyān's transgressions also linked him to larger moral conflicts between Indian and imperial standards of morality. As we have seen in the episode describing Banē Miyān's confinement, the particularly offensive aspect of his activity in the cantonment bazaar was his repeated visits to an opium dealer there. Other episodes in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* further detail his extensive use of cannabis. Devotees reverently loaded his straight pipe or chillum, for example, which on at least one occasion was dispatched to cure a man dying from snakebite, the drug-pipe acting as a direct competitor to colonial medicine.[94] Several other narratives in both *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* and the *faqīr*'s later oral tradition revolved around his own smoking of the chillum. Aside from this pipe, according to *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*, Banē Miyān's only possessions seem to have been a simple local blanket (*kamal*), with which he sometimes covered himself in public, and the pebbles (*konkar*) or occasionally bones (*hadī*) which he would throw to his supplicants when granting a request. The act of throwing these items seems to have been accompanied by the rage or anger of the madmen that was traditionally understood as the *faqīr* being in a state of *jalāl* or holy wrath but which we might easily see in more pathological terms. In any case, what is clear is that Banē Miyān was by no means always a gentle soul but also an angry man of righteous *jalāl;* or, in the new terminology of the asylum, a raving 'maniac'.[95]

The combination of Banē Miyān's drug-use and insanity pushes him still deeper in colonial debates about morality and madness, which, from the 1880s, were increasingly characterised by arguments over the social and psychological effects of cannabis and opium use. During the second half of the nineteenth century, British public opinion had swung firmly in opposition to opium use even among non-Europeans, due in part to the evangelical promotion of national guilt in the wake of the Opium Wars earlier in the century.[96] Though recognised as less physically ruinous than opium, cannabis was for its part suspected for its connection to the moral disintegration through which insanity was widely understood and thence described in the asylum reports. Indeed, one of the central preoccupations that governed the classification of the native inmates of India's asylums and connected the asylum policy to debates in parliament in London, was the specific relationship between cannabis and insanity.[97] This was not unique to India. The re-establishment of the Cairo asylum under British supervision in 1894 was accompanied by similar investigations of the effects of cannabis use on the inmates, research which was explicitly framed with regard to the more extensive data drawn from India.[98]

The annual reports compiled in India's native asylums during the last decades of the nineteenth century by the directors of the numerous native asylums delineated in fine detail the newly found 'scientific' connection between cannabis and madness, drawing conclusions which pointed beyond purely mechanical causality towards the notions of moral corruption that would prove so amenable to political rhetoric. The annual reports of the asylums demonstrate the degree to which preoccupations formed through the encounter of science with the politics of temperance in the imperial centre had penetrated colonial attitudes towards madness in distant India. In 1874, Dr Miller reported from one of the Bombay Presidency asylums that the majority of Indian patients were there as a result of 'debauchery, dissipation, meager fare, lack of ventilation, and neglect of moral culture'.[99] Expanding on the precise nature of this dissipation and debauchery, the report noted that 'a large number' of those admitted had previously been in the habit of using large quantities of *bhāng*, liquor, *gānjā* or opium, with the Muslim patients being particularly associated with the use of 'intoxicating drugs'.[100] With the rise of the cannabis question over the following decades, the figures recorded for the use of *charas*, *bhāng* and *gānjā* became increasingly detailed.[101] By 1891, some fifty-six of the 162 people confined in Miller's asylum were classified as being insane due to the use of one or other of these preparations of cannabis.[102] Across the Bombay Presidency as a whole, some 203 of the 961 persons detained in the native asylums in 1891 were registered as insane through the abuse of drugs or spirits.[103]

In Banē Miyān's use of cannabis and opium that is so clearly attested in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*, the *faqīr* neatly reflected the new colonial pathology of madness. Indeed, the very structure of the anecdote that we have translated from *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* concerning Banē Miyān's confinement carries echoes of this colonial discourse in the narrative opposition it set up between his detainment in the asylum and his repeated miraculous appearance in the opium shop. The colonial 'mad house' and the opium shop appear here as binary opposites, alternative sites of the different moral orders that were represented in Hyderabad by the Cantonment Magistrate and the Indian *faqīr*. Structural significances aside, we can also locate Banē Miyān's drug-use in a more sharply historical setting. For in Chapter 2 we have already read references to the extent of drug-use among the soldiers of the Contingent, with the sepoys of the 3rd Risala of cavalry described by one contemporary as 'opium eaters almost to a man'.[104] The Hyderabadi soldiers' use of opium had its origins in wider pre-colonial traditions of using opium not solely for pleasure but also to summon endurance and frenzy in battle. Whether or not such intoxication was always useful to the purposes of war is perhaps questionable. In James

Fairweather's memoirs of fighting the rebels of 1857, he recalled a skirmish near Bareilly with a group of around 200 *mujāhidīn*, noting that 'many of them were so drugged with bhang that they did not know whether they were striking with the flat or the edge of their swords'.[105] Nevertheless pragmatic motivations of some kind – assuaging fear, summoning frenzy – were still presumably central to the Indian warrior's drug-use. The sepoy autobiographer Sītā Rām sought to understand the drinking habits of British soldiers in this practical manner, noting how despite the white soldiers' fondness for Indian country liquor (*dārū*, literally 'drug, medicine'), their own English rum possessed a special power to make men brave in battle that Indian liquor lacked![106] In such ways, the *bhāng* and opium use of the Indian soldier merits cross-cultural comparison with the use of narcotics in other military contexts, from the purported use of hallucinogenic mushrooms by Viking Berzerkers to the dispensing of cocaine to Bavarian soldiers in the 1880s by Theodor Aschenbrandt and the use of amphetamine 'Go Pills' by the US Air Force of the 1940s.

While we cannot take at face value the statement that the horsemen of the 3rd Risala of cavalry in Hyderabad were opium eaters one and all, it was the case that older colonial concerns about the sepoys' use of 'native intoxicants' were growing in the last decades of the nineteenth century.[107] By the early twentieth century, European stereotypes of the debilitated opium addict also led to a strict ban on opium use by soldiers in Iran, whose armies were being 'modernised' in this period by European officers.[108] In so far as this is true, we can suggest that Banē Miyān's drug behaviour in the years which won him cultic fame were not solely due to the legacy of a narrowly religious tradition of the antinomian *faqīr* but were also in substantial part the reflection of an inheritance of military culture that he had received from his years as a sepoy. Despite the careful clarifications made in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* by his biographer that his activities should be understood as resulting from the fact that he was a *majzūb* – so as to derive his religious identity from within the respectable discourse of Islamic hagiology – from this alternative perspective Banē Miyān's behaviour reflected the military dimension to his life gained through his exposure to the barracks culture of the Contingent.[109] The opium use, the camaraderie with the sepoys, even the love of pranks and subaltern subterfuge that formed so characteristic a part of his later life as a *faqīr* were, in this sense, the legacy of his earlier life among the Contingent's soldiers. For all of the attempts of Banē Miyān's biographer to make sense (and seriousness) of the *faqīr*'s behaviour through recourse to the theological category of *jazb* or ecstatic 'attraction' towards God, for the social historian it makes more sense to understand Banē Miyān's career as the more distinctive expression of a barracks Islam, the forms and

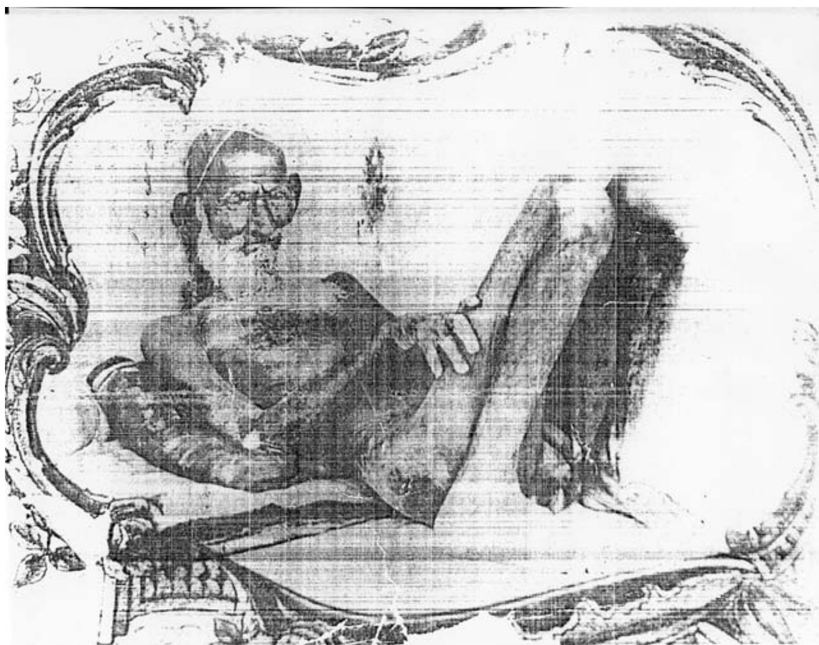


Figure 5 Framed photograph of Banē Miyān posing for devotee's camera, *c*. 1915.

fellowship of which were substantially defined by the military environment in which it took root and flourished. By these means we are able to picture the *faqīr* in his more fragile humanity: exposed in the first part of his life to the institutional forces of the colonial army and asylum, in the last decade, of his life he was compelled by his mania to prowl the streets of the same cantonment through which he had once marched in line. A kind of *commandant fou*, he had to come to harangue the very soldiers among whom he had once served. Even in his madness, the 'little bridegroom' Muhammad Aʿzam Khān was unable to free himself from the cantonment's imperial world-in-miniature that shaped him.

From sepoy to *jāgīrdār*: authors, heirs and architecture

In 1335/1917, four years before Banē Miyān's death in 1339/1921, a formal Persian certificate or *sanad-e-khilāfat* was issued appointing the *faqīr*'s nephew and subsequent biographer Ismāʿīl Khān (d. 1376/1956) as his spiritual deputy (*khalīfa*). This was a clear sign that Banē Miyān was

gathering a following numerous enough to require a degree of administration, for there is an important sense in which Ismāʿīl Khān should be seen as the impresario of his raving uncle, managing the donations that he was now attracting from even the highest levels of Hyderabadi society and so stepping beyond the military milieu of his family and original sepoy constituency. Banē Miyān's transformation from sepoy to saint was already under way. This document gave Ismāʿīl Khān the right to appoint disciples on his own behalf and to lead the death anniversaries (*ʿurs*) of the pre-eminent figures of what was being claimed as Banē Miyān's Sufi lineage, namely the key figures associated with his own childhood patron Afzal Shāh, such as the great ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), whose death anniversary was in any case a state and thence sepoy holiday in Hyderabad.[110] As in the case of the Muharram celebrations at Bolarum, in Ismāʿīl Khān's organisation of these festivities we see a reflection of the link between Muslim festivals and sepoy recreation, for the *ʿurs* celebrations would have included feasts, a fairground and the singing of the *tawāʾif* (dancers, prostitutes) whose company Banē Miyān (and no doubt many other sepoys) is said in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* to have enjoyed. The *khilāfat* document was certified with the seals and signatures of several local witnesses, who included the hereditary Sufi representatives (*sajjāda nashīns*) of the Mughal-era Sufis Shāh Sōkhta Miyān (*fl.* 1080/1670?) and Nizām al-dīn Awrangābādī (d. 1142/1729), whose supernatural intervention on the battlefield was said to have led to the foundation of Hyderabad State. Intertwined with legal matters of the inheritance of endowed property (*waqf*), as well as the symbolic capital of the *faqīr*'s *barakat*, such certificates demonstrate the way in which religious identity became interwoven with the bureaucratic and legal procedures of modernity.[111] For in Hyderabad, as in other Muslim environments in the same period, as a public concern religious authority and its inheritance attracted the regulating hands of the centralising states that were emerging under colonial tutelage right across the Islamic world.[112] By virtue of the social influence that Banē Miyān's popularity showed that religious ecstasy possessed, as in so many other settings this meant that ecstatic religion required socialisation and ultimately control by the state.[113] Just as the colonial authorities had tried to control the *faqīr* in his lifetime, after his death it was the turn of the proxy powers of Hyderabad to make him fit with the structures of a bureaucratised Islam.

The intervention of the states religious authorities was a sign that Banē Miyān's fame had spread beyond Aurangabad. Judging by the anecdotes of sepoy redeployment that appear in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*, it seems likely that, as with Afzal Shāh, it was the circulation of his regimental devotees that had been in large part responsible for the spread of his fame. Word of

Banē Miyān also reached the Nizam Mahbūb ʿAlī Khān, who was in any case a lavish patron of the holy men of his realm. As we have seen, as a result, in 1309/1891 the Nizam granted an income of 15 rupees per month for Banē Miyān's food and drink (*khūr wa nūsh*), which was increased to 25 rupees (and eventually 50 rupees) when the Nizam visited Aurangabad in person in 1916.[114] This income was later transferred to the *faqīr*'s nephew, Bahādur Khān, who acted as the caretaker (*muntazim*) of Banē Miyān's shrine when his cousin, the author of *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*, Ismāʿīl Khan, became Banē Miyān's first cult successor (*sajjāda nashīn*). The occasion of Banē Miyān's death and funeral in 1339/1921 are described in some detail in an official letter written to the chief Indian administrator (*sūbehdār*) of Aurangabad shortly after Banē Miyān's death.[115] The letter describes the funeral as being attended by a huge crowd composed of the *faqīr*'s Hindu and Muslim followers who gathered in the streets of the 'native' town. The Muslim party alone was large enough to fill the great Friday mosque built in the city by the Mughal emperor Awrangzeb and spill out into the ruins of his former palace, the Qila Arak. Due to the eagerness of so many people to pay their last respects, the letter describes how the funeral lasted from the morning until the last hours of the evening, during which time the shops of the city's bazaars were all closed in mourning.

In 1932, a domed mausoleum was built over Banē Miyān's grave, so rendering permanent the charisma of the living *faqīr* with the durability of dressed stone. *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* mentions several landowners (*jāgīrdārs*) and Hyderabadi officials as being followers of Banē Miyān, and their attachment to the *faqīr* during his lifetime was sufficient to grant enough funds for his shrine to be established in his family compound. As in the case of Afzal Shāh, who also cultivated connections with the local landlords, the poverty of the *faqīrs* always needed the support of salaried or landed wealth, and, in Banē Miyān's case, it was landholders and civil servants rather than sepoys who paid for his mausoleum. The main bequest of land amounting to around 62 acres, came from Ramz ʿAlī Shāh, while the mausoleum itself was paid for by another local member of the Nizam's bureaucracy called Zamīr al-Hasan.[116] The attachment of such local notables to the *faqīr* later resulted in Banē Miyān's family being given more landholdings (*jāgīr*) around the village of Harsul just outside Aurangabad as a pious endowment or *waqf* for the foundation and upkeep of a shrine. The architectural style of the mausoleum closely followed the prototypes of the region's earlier Muslim shrines, particularly those of Nizām al-dīn Awrangābādī (a short distance away) and Shāh Nūr Hammāmī a few miles away in the rural suburbs of the city. In this way, the style of the mausoleum placed Banē Miyān within a tradition of

Muslim saints in the Deccan, hiding the specificity of his sepoy world under the broader canopy of saintly architecture.[117] With Banē Miyān's identity now fixed in the terminology of the Sufis, his transformation from sepoy to saint was complete. And so, in the pages of *Aʿzam al-karāmāt*, we are presented with the perspective on Banē Miyān's identity of his nephew, an aspiring Muslim religious notable in a Muslim princely state. Through his madness, Banē Miyān had enabled his nephew and wider family to transform their status from a military to a religious family, exchanging military service for the life of the religious landowner. For all the cold comforts of the asylum, the alternative meanings given to Banē Miyān's madness by his Indian followers had bought his family a commission in the ranks of Hyderabad's religious establishment.

We should not forget the prestige that came with entry into the class of *sajjāda nashīns* in the Nizam's State, for this was still a period in which Hyderabad possessed a self-consciously Muslim establishment. Documentation from the 1940s shows the relative success of Banē Miyān's shrine in the last years before Hyderabad's demise in 1948, a period in which the shrine attracted hundreds of pilgrims to attend the occasion of the *faqīr*'s death anniversary every year.[118] Through the help of their ecstatic relative, whose distracted and manic states were interpreted as a sign of divine favour through recourse to the notion of *jazb*, Banē Miyān's family was able to move from one pillar of respectability to another, from the military to the religious class of Hyderabad. No longer only the scions of cavalrymen of the Hyderabad Contingent, the family were now the heirs of a *walī*, a saint whose renown was even capable of attracting the attention of the Nizam. The shrine built for the sepoy-turned-*faqīr* had become another of the holy sites of barracks Islam, albeit one that substantially disguised the origins of its saint in the armies of the British Empire.

Just another mad sepoy? Tāj al-dīn Bābā of Nagpur

In order to establish that Banē Miyān was by no means a uniquely idiosyncratic figure, the following pages explore the career of another 'mad sepoy' committed to the asylum during Banē Miyān's years of fame. This sepoy *faqīr* was Tāj al-dīn Bābā (d. 1344/1925), who lived in the capital of the Central Provinces of British India at Nagpur to the north of Hyderabad.[119] Like Banē Miyān, Tāj al-dīn was born into a family tradition of military service to the British. His father, Sayyid Badr al-dīn had served in the Madras Army and, while in service, moved from his native Madras to the garrison town of Kamptee, where Tāj al-dīn was born in 1277/1861.[120] Kamptee had been founded as a military cantonment

shortly after Aurangabad in 1821 and was located some 10 miles from what was the Maratha princely capital of Nagpur until its lapse to the British in 1853.[121] Just as Banē Miyān had been brought before Afzal Shāh as a child, during his infancy Tāj al-dīn was likewise initiated as a protégé of a local *faqīr* called ʿAbd Allāh Shāh of Kamptee.[122] While nothing more is known of this figure, given his residence in the cantonment and his association with Tāj al-dīn's sepoy father, it is likely that he too had other sepoy followers in the manner of Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān.

Like many a sepoy's son, Tāj al-dīn was orphaned in his youth and subsequently brought up by an uncle, who worked for the Forestry Department that was expanding the commercial and political interests of the Raj into the hilly tribal regions around Nagpur. When this uncle's house was destroyed in a monsoon flood in 1881, at the age of twenty, Tāj al-dīn entered the Nagpur Regiment and served with them for around three years.[123] During this period he was stationed at the Bolarum barracks on the outskirts of Hyderabad from which so many of Afzal Shāh's followers were drawn. There Tāj al-dīn is said to have become attached to a British officer named Williams.[124] According to the biographical tradition established in subsequent years, the young soldier entered a state of religious distraction after meeting a *faqīr* called Dāʾūd Shāh in 1301/1884. Given the accounts we have seen in *Afzal al-karāmāt* and *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* of sepoys visiting *faqīrs*, the likelihood of such an encounter seems highly probable, and, in Chapter 2, we have already seen the story of the cavalryman Muhammad Khān turning ecstatic and running to the hills after a meeting with Afzal Shāh. The mere fact of a visit to a holy man is perhaps always suggestive of some kind of underlying dissatisfaction, whether relating to a specific worry or some more general *Weltschmerz* (so preferable a term to the modern phraseology of 'depression'). The causes and character of Tāj al-dīn's madness remain obscure, as perhaps they were even to himself. With regard to Banē Miyān, as historians we have only the evidence of others' diagnoses, of Tāj al-dīn as either a *majzūb* or an 'insane'.

In varying degrees, Tāj al-dīn's state of ecstasy lasted for the rest of his life. His biography recounts that the soldier's ecstatic new manner was read by his officers as the symptoms of madness. While some of his surviving relatives did try to look after him in the years in which his affliction was first apparent, eventually he was abandoned to the life of a vagabond living among the slums at the edge of the Kamptee garison. Like Banē Miyān in the cantonment at Aurangabad, Tāj al-dīn was compelled to haunt the ruins of his former life in the Indian Army. Eventually this casualty of empire attracted the attention of people through what were taken to be his miraculous deeds and predictions. According to his biographical

tradition, Tāj al-dīn became so tired of the attention he attracted at the Kamptee cantonment that he decided to act in such a way as to force its British administrators to lock him away. In the summer of 1892, he walked naked into the grounds of the Nagpur Club, where a group of memsahibs were innocently enjoying their tennis. As a result, on 26 August 1892, the CM of Kamptee had Tāj al-dīn placed in the Nagpur asylum.[125] The account of his detention – escorted under armed guard at the CM's command only to confound his British keepers by being spotted roaming freely just hours later in the Kamptee bazaar – is remarkably similar to the story of Banē Miyān's incarceration.[126] Whatever the factual historicity of this account of miraculous escape, at the very least it demonstrates vividly the popular perception of the *faqīr* as the elusive and uncatchable dissenter, as a colourful and no less entertaining Scarlet Pimpernel of the British Raj. The resonance possessed by the stories of Tāj al-dīn's and Banē Miyān's escapes was perhaps all the stronger for the folk memory of the mass gaol-break of over 23,000 prisoners that accompanied the Rebellion of 1857.[127] For if incarceration – whether in prison, asylum or quarantine – was one of the characteristic innovations of British rule in India, then both as fact and as folktale, escape was one of the most emblematic forms of resistance. Like so many 'subaltern' narratives, the *faqīrs*' escape stories affected a classic reversal of agency. Tāj al-dīn's actions were not unfettered acts of mania, for he *chose* to be taken into the asylum through his deliberate decision to stroll naked through the tennis court. He was not confined in the asylum, for the story shows he could escape at will. Instead, he *chose* to reside there, to enjoy its peace and quiet and, ultimately, to transform his cell into a place of pilgrimage while he sat and stared at the people who came to visit him. The dismissed foot soldier confined to the madhouse was reconfigured in Tāj al-dīn as a man in control of his destiny, reversing the probable facts of his misfortune so that through his slip to the bottom of the social order he reappeared in a trice at its top. In the historical imagination of his followers, Tāj al-dīn transformed the colonial hierarchy into an illusionist's helter-skelter – 'when you get to the bottom you go back to the top'.

The records of the native asylum at Nagpur for 1892 and 1893 give us an idea of the institutional and discursive environment into which Tāj al-dīn was placed in the first months of his confinement. In 1892 there were 131 inmates at Nagpur.[128] Under the administration of its superintendent, the army physician Major Dr H. K. McKay, a number of 'radical improvements' were made to the asylum that year, including the construction of new walls and strong railings.[129] The official reports from the previous decade illustrate a regular pattern of escapes from the Nagpur asylum, to which McKay's new security measures were presumably



Figure 6 The 'natives only' asylum at Nagpur.

responding. In spite of these attempts to render the hospital a prison, the asylum reports also record that there was still one escape from Nagpur in 1892. While none of the reports recorded the names of those resident in the native asylums, so transforming the individuality of their madness into the tabulated and anonymous data of empire, by cross-reference to the records for 1893 we are able to detect the possible presence of Tāj al-dīn. For while in 1892 there were two sepoys registered at the asylum, by the following year there were none.[130] It is also recorded that among the twenty-seven new admissions during 1892, there was one sepoy, classed as a 'military insane'.[131] In other words, in the year that Tāj al-dīn's biographers record his entry into the asylum and his escape later the same year, the reports confirm the admission of a sepoy that year in addition to the one other sepoy already there; the escape of an (anonymous) inmate several months later; and the absence of any sepoys the following year. Given the tabulated format of the reports, it is not possible to verify whether one of the two sepoys who left during 1892–3 was the escapee, nor whether this was, in turn, Tāj al-dīn. All that we can say with certainty is that a 'military insane' was admitted to the Nagpur asylum in the year recorded by Tāj al-dīn's biographers. But ultimately such detective work gets us nowhere: we cannot be sure whether Tāj al-dīn did briefly escape the asylum (though we know the odd inmate did every year, particularly from Nagpur) or whether this was nothing more than bazaar rumour.

From the limited data available, it is impossible to fully establish whether Tāj al-dīn's biography recorded events in the world or only set up hagiographical strategies to disguise his sixteen years of incarceration with a fiction of his escape and voluntary return to the asylum in order to

conceal his factual powerlessness. Once again, the mad soldier is pulled in different directions and made to serve different ends; his own place in the world is lost in a discursive tug-of-war. Here the telling of history appears as a struggle between duress and desire. What the colonial authorities regarded as insanity was seen by the *faqīr*'s burgeoning clientele in Nagpur as a sign of religious authority. In an inversion of the career path of the servant of empire in which there is much room for pathos, the alienation bred by colonial service was read as a manifestation of cultural authenticity: the sickened subaltern became celebrated as the miraculous *faqīr*.[132] That is if indeed it was alienation, because the *faqīr*'s madness remains ultimately inscrutable and is malleable to many a meaning.

As in the case of Banē Miyān, Tāj al-dīn's states of abstraction and distraction played a central role in his veneration. His incoherent lack of any specific teaching allowed devotees to make their own meaning of his madness in ways suited to their own preconceptions. In this way, the *majzūb* served as a *tabula rasa* for the anxious imaginations of his callers, a wax tablet able to capture the varied meanings that pilgrims impressed upon him. His inchoate utterances and sheer ambiguity were the tools of his success. Paradoxically, this very silence became the medium of a universal eloquence that his followers felt him to possess. Here we can sense something of Tāj al-dīn's plight, left on the streets of Kamptee as crowds started to gather around him, attracted by the spectacle that the publicly insane formed in India. In provoking his own incarceration through his naked dash through the clubhouse we can alternatively read his motive as a desire to be readmitted to the kind of colonial institution from which he had earlier fled or been expelled with his dismissal from the army. The asylum was perhaps a surrogate for the barrack hall.

Like Banē Miyān in the cantonment in Aurangabad, Tāj al-dīn also acted as a transgressor of colonial space, and here he contributed to the creation of a colonial typology. For the section on Nagpur in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* remarked that despite their small number, the city's Muslims were 'the most turbulent part of the population'.[133] The power to outwit colonial regulations was further emphasised in narratives recounting Tāj al-dīn's continued appearance in the streets of Nagpur despite being locked up in the asylum; the memsahibs of Nagpur were once again forced to complain. But, just as Banē Miyān miraculously outflanked plague officers and CMs and won new followers in the process, so according to his biography did Tāj al-dīn's mysterious ability to escape incarceration win him the admiration of the asylum's Indian assistant, Dr ʿAbd al-Majīd, who subsequently became his devotee.[134] While the official reports of the asylum contain no reference to a Dr ʿAbd al-Majīd at Nagpur, they do record the name of Superintendent McKay's Indian

assistant as ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ('Abdul Aziz'), and it may have been this name which was garbled in the course of oral transmission before his biography was written down.[135] Whatever we make of the biographer's claim of ʿAbd al-Majīd's devotion to the *faqīr*, in its structured transferring reversal of the allegiance of the asylum's chief Indian officer from the colonial science of McKay to the miracles of Tāj al-dīn, the narrative illustrates the same pattern of writing against history that we have seen in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* and *Afzal al-karāmāt*.

After Tāj al-dīn's formal release from the asylum in 1908, he was invited to live in the palace grounds of the deposed raja of Nagpur.[136] In 1908, he was taken from the Nagpur asylum into the household of Rāja Raghō Bhōnslē (born 1872), the descendant of the deposed Maratha rulers of Nagpur.[137] Despite escaping for a short period, Tāj al-dīn remained in Lāl Kōthī, the maharaja's palace in the Sakkadara Bagh suburb of Nagpur, for the rest of his life, a late example of the pre-colonial tradition of Hindu rulers patronising Muslim holy men.[138] There Tāj al-dīn received large numbers of Hindu and Muslim visitors, who expressed devotion according to their own ritual customs; his shrine remains in the maharaja's garden to this day.[139] The most interesting report we have of Tāj al-dīn is thus found not in the writings of a Muslim follower but in the Urdu travel diary of Hyderabad's Hindu prime-minister Kishan Parshād, who made a pilgrimage to visit Tāj al-dīn in around 1913.[140] Although provoked by the sickness of his son, Kishan's pilgrimage was made in considerable comfort and style, making use of the rail network that by now connected Hyderabad with Nagpur and on which Kishan traveled in a luxurious suite of private carriages. Having eventually tracked the mad sepoy down to the maharaja's garden on the outskirts of Nagpur, Kishan went before Tāj al-dīn to voice a plea to save his feverish son. Kishan described in his diary how, before he could say anything, he found himself mesmerised by the *faqīr*'s gaze, into which he stared for what seemed like an age of enraptured 'eye-flirting' (*dīdbāzī*). Then, breaking the 'connection' (*nisbat*) between them, Tāj al-dīn suddenly grabbed a handful of dirt and threw it randomly towards a flock of pigeons, causing them to scatter into the heavens. It was the same kind of raving that we have seen earlier in the stone-throwing of Banē Miyān. At this, Kishan thought it his time to depart, but, as he did so, the sight of the smartly dressed departing prime minister seems to have summoned in Tāj al-dīn the memory of his earlier years of drill. For just then, Kishan wrote, in the manner of an army sepoy (*jaisē fawjī sipāhī*), Tāj al-dīn sharply saluted him as he made his departure, and, recalling some few words of English that he had perchance picked up on the parade ground, the former sepoy bade his visitor farewell by declaring 'All right and good morning!'[141] For Kishan, these incongruous hollered remnants

of the *faqīr*'s years in service were not the evidence of a mind that had been shattered on the anvil of empire but instead a benediction for his dying son: *all shall be well, all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be* … 'all right'. Not only the colonial army, now even the English language had become a tool of the *faqīr*'s trade.

Like Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān, Tāj al-dīn had an extensive repertoire of miracles that reflected those associated with other *faqīrs* of the period. He cured a man of paralysis, brought a child back from the dead and disappeared from a photograph taken of him standing with a group of students from the Anglo-Mohammedan College at Aligarh.[142] Some of Tāj al-dīn's miracles point towards a defence of the customary traditions of the pre-colonial era. He was said to have helped bring back from the dead a courtesan (*tawāʾif*) of the kind long associated with India's *faqīrs* and to have summoned a lonely Afghan *faqīr* to visit him in Nagpur from the distant mountains of the far north. Even a tiger was turned into a tame companion through Tāj al-dīn's deranged proximity to God.[143] Aiding the lowest classes of colonial society, he intervened when a murderer was brought before him by a pair of sepoys who were keeping him guard.[144]

Among his closest followers were other *faqīrs* who had served in the Indian Army. One such former sepoy, known as Bābā ʿAbd al-Rahmān (d. 1344/1925), had also apparently served in the Madras Army in his early career, before working on one of the new ocean liners serving the ports of India.[145] A prediction which he is said to have made of India's impending freedom from British rule has strong echoes of earlier *faqīrs*' predictions of political events, again placing the British into older patterns of Indo-Muslim historiography.[146] Another of Tāj al-dīn's *faqīr* followers, Muhammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. unknown), was, like Tāj al-dīn the son of a sepoy in the Madras Army.[147] The switch from sepoy to *faqīr* was therefore not uncommon and may be compared with the limited career options open to demobilised or dismissed soldiers in other societies. In Victorian and Edwardian Britain, many a former soldier simply turned tramp or else took up the hard life of a navvy digging railways and sewers. In India, there remained for such old soldiers a perhaps preferable middle way: the life of the *faqīr*. Part tinker, part captain, the *faqīr* gained a degree of both freedom and command that he might never earn in decades of military service. Consider the military titles we have seen in Chapter 1 used by Tnugge and *faqīr* gangs in the early 1800s. Even by 1900, very few Indians broke beyond the 'native officer' ranks of the Indian Army. There was, then, a certain careerist logic in the decision of such former sepoys as Bābā ʿAbd al-Rahmān to take up the *faqīr*'s life, a life which in its itinerancy and its distance from mundane domesticity bore many parallels with the life of the colonial soldier.



Figure 7 Portraits of Tāj al-dīn Bābā.

A mother for the sepoys: Bābā Jān of Poona

While we have previously emphasised the denigration of the *faqīr* in colonial discourse, the fame of Banē Miyān and Tāj al-dīn shows the continued importance of the *faqīrs* to Indian soldiers, as well as other

sections of Indian society, in the opening decades of the twentieth century. As we have seen by reference to Tāj al-dīn of Nagpur, Banē Miyān's role in Aurangabad as the supernatural subverter of British authority for the subaltern service class was also reflected in the careers of *faqīrs* in cantonment districts outside Hyderabad State. Such *faqīrs* were by no means exclusively male, and, to further our sense of the scale of such *faqīrs*' activities, we now turn towards the case of one such female *faqīr*, Bābā Jān (d. 1350/1931), who lived in the great military cantonment of Poona.[148] The earliest sources on Bābā Jān's life date only from the 1920s, and so it is difficult to obtain reliable information on her early career. However, her association from the 1910s with the Parsi mystic Meher Bābā (1894–1969), who claimed that Bābā Jān enlightened him as a youth through her mere touch, meant that several members of Meher Bābā's circle recorded their own memories of Bābā Jān beneath her neem tree in the Poona cantonment, which lay around 110 miles to the south-west of Aurangabad in the Bombay Presidency. Like the family origins of Banē Miyān, those of Bābā Jān point to the northern regions of the subcontinent and to the military service itineraries that relocated so many members of the Pathan and Punjabi 'warrior races' to the cantonment towns of central and southern India. Although her given name was Gulrukh, she was better known as Bābā Jān, a nickname based on the term of endearment for a 'dear child' (*bābā jān*) that echoes Banē Miyān's own childlike moniker. The *faqīrs* after all had an infantile quality: innocent, trusting and wonder-struck but, at the same time fickle, vengeful and capricious.

Unlike Banē Miyān, whose grandfather migrated to the south from Punjab, it was Bābā Jān herself who migrated southwards from her family homeland in Baluchistan or the North-West Frontier Province, spending time in a series of cantonment or other British-founded towns before settling in Poona around 1904. While Bābā Jān's precise geographical origins are no more clear than her date of birth, she was said to have grown up in the region to the north of Quetta and to have been of Pathan (rather than Baluch) ancestry. Biographical tradition describes her fleeing a marriage arrangement in her late teens and staying in Peshawar before moving to the garrison town of Rawalpindi a decade or so after its foundation in 1849. After spending many years in Rawalpindi and then Multan, she travelled south, arriving in Bombay in around 1900, where she associated herself with the gangs of *faqīrs* (particularly one led by ʿAbd al-Rahmān of Dongri) that formed a notable subculture colonial Bombay. Her motivation in travelling to Bombay seems to have been due to the city's role as the main Indian port for ships to Jidda (and thence Mecca), for, from the mid-nineteenth century, Bombay became the crucial staging post for pilgrims making the *hajj* from all over India as well as from Iran

and Central Asia.[149] Stories about Bābā Jān's *hajj* in 1321/1903 were later recorded by a journalist writing for the *Times of India* in 1926. Like Banē Miyān and other *faqīrs*, Bābā Jān was associated with several miracles involving both the sea journey to Mecca and the pilgrimage to the tomb of ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī in Baghdad which was a popular supplement to the *hajj* among Indian pilgrims.[150] A similar story in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* describes a group of twenty-five sepoys travelling to pay thanks to the shrine of Afzal Shāh at Qazipeth. The soldiers described how their ship had been caught in a storm on the way to Jidda. When the ship began to slip beneath the waves, and the captain informed his passengers that all hope was lost, the soldiers decided to pray to Banē Miyān. And, sure enough, five minutes later the *faqīr* appeared in the waves, supporting the keel of the ship on his shoulder. When the English captain demanded to know who this 'madman' (*diwāna*) was, the soldiers proudly replied that he was their Muslim padre (*pīr pādrī*).[151] For her part, Bābā Jān was similarly said to have saved the steamship *Haidari* on which she was travelling during a storm. In a wonderful meeting of worlds, the report in the *Times of India* described how during the ocean journey to Mecca, 'she saved the steamer from being dashed to pieces after all the passengers, including the European ones, had promised to garland the grave of the Holy Prophet.'[152] On another occasion, she was said to have miraculously summoned funds for the journey to Baghdad of an indigent devotee, something which Banē Miyān also did.[153]

Like Banē Miyān again, in addition to her native Pashto, Bābā Jān was said to have had the ability to speak several languages, including Arabic, Persian and Urdu. The *Times of India* articles about her also highlighted this linguistic aptitude, which we might take as a reflection of her residence in various cities of British India. In reporting the story of Bābā Jān's *hajj* miracle of 1903, the *Times* correspondent in Poona also claimed that 'she spoke fluent English.' Once again, the *faqīr*'s talents closely reflected the demands of her colonial environment, with the temporarily mobile followers from all corners of the subcontinent demanding protection during their travels from a supernatural insurance broker who could speak their own languages.

After moving to Poona in around 1904, Bābā Jān established herself beneath a large neem tree next to Malcolm Tank, alongside the boundary wall of the cantonment. There she began to attract enough followers to bring her presence to the attention of the colonial authorities. Like many other districts bordering the barracks of the sepoys, the Char Bavadi area on the Poona cantonment's edge where Bābā Jān resided was already a notorious haunt of toddy drinkers and smokers of opium and cannabis.[154] There was nothing unique in this, for such dens were a typical feature of

every Indian cantonment. In his nineteenth-century account of the nearby cantonment of Seroor, the Bombay Army officer John Howison had thus described a place called 'Scandal-Point, where the idlers of Seroor used to assemble in the evening and amuse themselves', as well as a house of ill-repute that 'belonged to an Indian fop, debauchee, and epicure' at which the soldiers liked to assemble.[155] While we have no evidence for Bābā Jān's own drug-use, each of the accounts of her describes her as no less deranged than Banē Miyān. Clearly, she would have fitted in well in Char Bavadi with the tramps who dropped out there and the revelling soldiers who dropped in for the pleasures of a pipe or a cup of tea.

Quite aside from the low company she kept, Bābā Jān attracted most attention from the colonial authorities through the disruption to the flow of traffic on Malcolm Tank Road that she inadvertently caused by the gatherings, and subsequent tea stalls and other street vendors, that congregated around her tree at the crossroads. She had become a kind of mad hostess for the cantonment's low-life's soirées. Given the location of her den and the links we have established between *faqīrs*, sepoys and a barracks culture of native drugs, it is perhaps unsurprising that we should find Bābā Jān associated with members of the Indian Army regiments stationed at the Poona cantonment. One of the best-known stories concerning Bābā Jān describes the collective astonishment of a regiment of Baluchi sepoys who had earlier known her in the Rawalpindi cantonment in Punjab but had believed her long dead, having seen her buried alive by a conspiracy of Baluchi *ʿulamā* who had decreed her raving declarations as blasphemous.[156] When the sepoys saw her alive and well on arriving at their new posting in Poona, they were convinced that she had miraculously returned from death and became her most assiduous followers. The role of rumour, and its amplification in the confined gossip circles of the barracks hall, in the making of a *faqīr*'s fame is all too clear from this anecdote. As all advertisers know, there is no better recommendation than that of colleagues and friends, and these rumours of the old woman's powers worked all too well. According to Meher Bābā's recollections of Bābā Jān, from at least 1913 her followers comprised large numbers of Pathan and Baluchi sepoys, men who, like the Pathan Bābā Jān herself, were displaced in Poona from their homelands over a thousand miles to the north.[157] The account of Bābā Jān being buried alive by the tribal mullahs of her Pathan homeland was scarcely original, for stories of live burial were a common topos – and indeed practice – among Muslim as well as Hindu ascetics in India. While it is impossible to assess the historicity of Bābā Jān's live burial as an event in the world, the story does demonstrate the type of feats that her sepoy followers associated with her, the same kind of rumours that, when circulated through the barracks,

lent a *faqīr* the aura of miraculous power sepoys valued in their perilous lives. It was the image of the *faqīr* as trickster, ever able to slip out of trouble or pull a card from their sleeves at the very moment that they – or their clients – needed it.

A more unusual visitor to Bābā Jān was the young English traveller Raphael Hurst (1898–1981), who was later to achieve fame through his writings on the 'mystic East' under the pen-name of 'Paul Brunton'. Occurring in the course of his travels around India in the 1920s, Brunton's encounter with Bābā Jān is important for the description of her dwelling place in which it resulted.[158] Lodging at a hotel in the Poona cantonment, when Brunton set out with an Indian interpreter to visit Bābā Jān, he described how they found her on the cantonment roadside:

> We find her in a narrow street, whose lighting is a quaint mixture of gaudy little oil lamps and electric globes. She lies, in full view of passers-by, upon a low divan. A fenced veranda rail separates it from the street. Above the wooden shelter rises the shapely outline of a neem tree, whose white blossoms make the air slightly fragrant […] She lies flat on her back, this ancient dame. Her head is propped by pillows. The lustrous whiteness of her silky hair offers a sad contrast to the heavily wrinkled face and seamed brow.[159]

Bābā Jān is said to have addressed the sepoys as her *bachē*, her boys, and this nomenclature perhaps suggests that she served as a surrogate yet miraculous mother to the sepoys on their postings far from hearth and home. Like Banē Miyān in Aurangabad during the same years, Bābā Jān became closely linked with Poona's colonial topography, haunting the boundaries of the cantonment with her wizened frame, her striking blue eyes and her shock of white hair. With her northern origins, her skin was fairer than that of many of the Indians of the south, perhaps adding to her strangely liminal air, balancing between the cantonment and the 'native town'; and between the world of men and gods. Later, when her clientele expanded beyond the ranks of the cantonment sepoys, a party of followers from the city's middle class began to take her by motorcar to the city's Bund Gardens, the public garden laid out by the Parsi businessman Sir Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy because Indians were barred from the city's other European-only parks.[160] Yet, all of the accounts of Bābā Jān present her in the same guise of holy fool as Banē Miyān, raving and muttering, prone to caprice and eccentricity, revelling in her filthy degradation of the flesh. With her blue eyes and her outdoor tea parties in the shade of a tree on the cantonment's edge, she was a kind of anti-memsahib presiding over beggars' banquets that turned the colonial order upside down. And what a hostess she must have seemed, for in the decades after she arrived in Poona she never once washed, but still insisted on wearing a surfeit of

shiny rings on her fingers. When one of her fingers went septic through a ring that was too tight, she refused all the pleas of her followers to remove it and left the finger to drop off from gangrene.[161] As anyone who has met such a *faqīr* knows, they have a certain ghoulish quality, like the living dead, lending an air of credence to the sepoys' story. Fittingly, Bābā Jān's age upon her death is uncertain. Like Banē Miyān, she was ascribed marvellous longevity and was widely reported as having being 125 when she died in 1931. Others who knew her placed her age at her death at no more than ninety-five.[162]

Suppressing the *faqīr*: from military culture to Islamic reform

The attitudes towards sepoy insanity and drug-use that in the histories of Banē Miyān and Tāj al-dīn we have seen put to institutional effect through army regulations, asylum policies and the work of the CM were part of a wider denigration of the old religion of the barracks that in the last chapter we also saw in its earlier evangelical form.[163] While the genealogies of these attitudes can be traced back to European Protestant attitudes towards the values and purposes of pleasure, they were particularly characteristic of the notion of 'true religion' and the high-minded sobriety of the secular civilising 'mission'. Partly through exposure to these colonial values, by the turn of the twentieth century there also emerged a series of Muslim reform movements in India that can be characterised as similarly 'Protestant' in their attitudes to festivities, scripture and hierarchical religious authority as well as to antinomianism and intoxication. Such reform movements were active in the same localities as the *faqīrs*, whose authority they publicly contested. At the same time that Banē Miyān was wandering drugged and naked through the streets of Aurangabad, a Hyderabadi missionary called Muʿīn Allāh Shāh (d. 1345/1926) was promoting such a reformist Islam based on the work and effort of each individual to save his soul through regular and rigorous observance of pious mystical exercises, a vision that his followers would later link to the ideology of activist Muslim existentialism propounded by Muhammad Iqbāl.[164] Like the colonial modernity they echoed, such forms of Islam had little sympathy for the begging of the *faqīrs* and the shirking of social responsibility that was, paradoxically, the *faqīr*'s very road to freedom. As the many playful and witty anecdotes in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* show in their resemblance to the witty *latīfa* of Urdu humourism, the Islam of Banē Miyān had lent a central place to jesting, pleasure and subversion. In numerous episodes in the text we read of Banē Miyān summoning musicians, spending time in the company of courtesans (*tawāʾif*) and leaning

back to enjoy the pleasures of his *gānjā* pipe; his biography is a celebration of an indolence that is next to godliness.[165] The *faqīrs*' pastimes had been long echoed by the recreations of the off-duty sepoy, but, through the combination of military suppression and the rise of a new Muslim moralism championing the virtues of 'busy-ness', the moral economy that had long lent the *faqīrs* their credibility was under attack in Hyderabad.

Such attitudes were not only directed towards Indians, and low-ranking British soldiers serving in the Indian Army were similarly subjected to new behavioral regulations, attempting to bring their sexual and bibulous pastimes into conformity with colonial public morals.[166] In Chapter 2, we have seen the rise of these sentiments through the vilification of carnivals such as Muharram. At the same time, negative colonial attitudes towards cannabis and opium were evolving with the spread of the Temperance Movement in India by missionaries and soldiers and, thence, through its adoption by indigenous reformists.[167] In a reflection of the infiltration of evangelical reform into the Indian Army, in a lesser-known aspect of his career during the middle years of the nineteenth century, Sir Henry Havelock (1795–1857) sponsored temperance societies in no fewer than thirty regiments, and his activities were continued long after his death.[168] What is especially interesting here was the utilitarian spin given to the 'practical morality' of temperance by which abstemiousness was seen to render a soldier a better fighting man as well as present a moral example to the Indians of 'the sober Englishman'.[169] While there were many attempts to police the cultures of pleasure among Indian society at large, the army formed a more institutionally controllable social unit in which to enforce such regulations, even if (as the Bolarum mutiny shows) such attempts to control religion-as-pleasure could sometimes lead to violent insurrection.

As we have seen, opium and other narcotics were an important part of the customary religion of Hyderabad that countless *faqīrs* shared with their protégés from the barracks and the court. Among soldiers who already made good use of opium, it was only natural that their patrons should enjoy the same pleasures, whether in terms of opium or foodstuffs, courtesans or musical gatherings, all of which we have seen *faqīrs* and sepoys sharing. Islam could take many forms, and, if Islamic law traditionally opposed the use of alcohol, its relationship to other intoxicants was more complex.[170] As commodities at work in the social world, traditional drugs played an important part in the social life of religion in which, in all its abundance of raw materials, the pharmacopeia of nature served as an arsenal with which Hyderabad's *faqīrs* and soldiers could confront the obstacles of their trade. By contrast, the religious ideology championed by Christian evangelical and Muslim reformists alike favoured action over

contemplation, a disciplinary culture with which CMs and commanding officers attempted to police the sepoy's traditional pleasures.[171]

With their daily proximity to the military representatives of the moral empire, Hyderabad's soldiers gradually began to desert their old *faqīr* friends. With the growth of Muslim separatism and calls for India's independence, the Hyderabadi soldier in colonial service became an easy target for having received the English king's shilling. The social status of the Hyderabad Contingent's old *ahl-e-sayf* or 'men of the sword' was in decline by the 1920s, and with their decline sank the status of their own form of Islam. With the growth of English-medium education for Indian officers in the Army, the seeds were set for Hyderabad's soldiers to dissociate themselves from their old *faqīr* patrons and join the Islam of the modernists who came to dominate Hyderabad's bureaucracy in the early twentieth century. Here in the growth of literacy – in Urdu no less than English – lay a further factor in the changing of the sepoys' Islam. After Urdu was made the official language of Hyderabad State during the 1880s, the centrality of Urdu to this increasingly logocentric culture became especially acute, so lending support to the Army's promotion of the language. As a result of the Nizam's State's promotion of Urdu and the foundation of modernising educational institutions, in the half century leading up to the death of Bābā Jān 1931, the rate of Muslim literacy (mainly in Urdu) doubled in Hyderabad State from around 5 per cent to 10 per cent.[172] In Hyderabad as in British India, the importance of literacy to Indian soldiers under British command had been lent official impetus even earlier, when in 1827 promotion into the native officer ranks was made dependent on literacy in either Persian or Hindi.[173] With the decline of Persian, it was Urdu – or 'military Hindustani' as the British had termed it – that became the lingua franca of the sepoy and his officers. As the accepted lingua franca of the Indian Army, 'Hindustani' Urdu was strongly promoted by the ordinances of army life both in British India and Hyderabad.[174] By the second half of the nineteenth century, the Indian Army had itself become one of the most important sponsors of Urdu printing, from the mass issue of regulation drill pamphlets and army magazines such as *Fawjī Akhbār* (*Army News*) to the production of Urdu texts suitable for the use of British soldiers wishing to learn 'Hindustani'. Aptly, one of the latter texts was the celebrated sepoy autobiography *From Sepoy to Subedar*, which, with the loss of its 'original' Hindi version, was translated into Urdu for use by British and Indian soldiers alike by the army's chief language instructor D. C. Philott and his *munshī* Mawlwī Rizā ʿAlī Wahshat.[175] It is no coincidence that the narrator of this text presented himself as a regular sceptic towards the claims of miraculous deeds that he encountered in his career. Like other good native officers in the

colonial mould, Sītā Rām championed only the 'rational' agency of brute military force. The staunch and reliable Jack Sepoy was tutored to behave like the common-sensical John Bull.

The main reason why we are able to acquire historical insight into the religious life of the Hyderabadi soldier in the period we have been examining is therefore closely linked to the changes occurring in the army itself. The increasing literacy of the Indian soldier meant that his religious life began to find written expression: now that he could read, the sepoy expected to find his world reflected in writing. But, ironically, the same skills that brought barracks Islam to written, and printed form would in the longer term accelerate its undoing by exposing the Hyderabadi soldier to the modernist religiosity espoused by the writings of the educators and civil servants of the last Nizam after his accession in 1911. By the very fact of their existence as written records of the Islam of the Hyderabadi sepoy, texts such as *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* were in themselves testament to the changes occurring in the religious life of India's soldiers. Writing, and its discrete ways of knowing, was entering a new social arena in the barracks in which religious texts had previously been minor subsidiaries to the supernatural men of influence who had for centuries accompanied warriors in both battle and repose. In the Urdu biographies of Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān, we have caught a glimpse of a sepoy religion that, despite adapting to colonial rule in the previous century, by the 1920s was disappearing.

Conclusions

> We know something of the barrack life of an English soldier – what do we suppose that of a sepoy is like?
> 'Jack Sepoy', *Fraser's Magazine* (1856)

The character of barracks Islam

In reconstructing the careers of Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān, the previous chapters have examined the different ways in which Muslim holy men were associated with the armies of the British Empire and their Muslim soldiers in Hyderabad. Given the specificity of the stories we have heard, it is now time to step back and draw conclusions concerning the processes by which the careers of the *faqīr* leaders of barracks Islam were made. While one of the intentions of this book has been to restore something of the individuality and idiosyncrasy of the nameless sepoys who made up the anonymous masses of the colonial army, it is no less important to ascertain the wider processes through which the sepoys' Islam interacted with the armies of empire. Whether these processes can be seen as applying to the lives of soldiers in other parts of India is for subsequent research to decide. Our conclusions focus on the three main issues that have emerged from the details of Chapters 2 and 3, namely the defining characteristics of barracks Islam; the role of military institutions in the promotion of this Islam; and the obverse question of role of military institutions in repressing or reforming it.

As we saw in the Introduction, Indian soldiers had cultivated connections with holy men they regarded as possessing supernatural powers long before the East India Company entered the military marketplace in India. Whether formally identified with specific traditions among the Sufi or *yōgī* orders or not, these men of supernatural influence long shared – and indeed contested – the ability to protect their protégés amid the perilous pursuits of the soldier's life. Before the arrival of the British, there had already emerged what we can regard as a supernatural service industry around the military bands of pre-colonial India that was supported by the economic rewards of war. As William Pinch's work has shown, it was into this military market of supernaturally as well as physically powerful

soldiering that the British entered during the scramble for India of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[1] In the previous chapters we have traced the development of warrior religion in the decades that followed the consolidation of British success in the barracks of Hyderabad State. The most efficient way of extrapolating the characteristics of this Islam is to ask the basic sociological question of what the conditions of the Indian soldier's life demanded of his religion. According to the material we have analysed, the short answer to this question is that the principal forces shaping the *faqīr* service industry that developed around the barracks were the soldiers' demands for protection from danger, promotion in their careers and the festive provision of pleasure.[2]

As the character of soldiering in India changed with the introduction of European models of military organisation and the replacement of conquest with the maintenance of rule after the pacification of India, so in turn did the nature of the sepoy's demands. Material reward was now sought through promotion rather than plunder, and the daily dangers faced by the Indian soldier were now typically those of illness and travel rather than regular exposure to battle. In response, the supernatural protectors of the Indian soldier turned their hands to new areas to apply their subtle assistance. With the increasing bureaucratisation of army life, in some cases they diversified their skills to offer help with the more bookish business of interpreting regulations, oath-taking or even teaching sepoys to read and write. In other cases, they ensured promotions or quashed dismissals by manipulating the minds of the sepoys' officers. In such ways, the changes in the characteristics of the sepoy's life under British rule found their expression in the changing character of sepoy religion, which was at no point in its history a stable phenomenon. Such changes were by no means limited to Muslim soldiers, and fascinating avenues for future research remain open in such areas as the deification of commanders by their troops, a process which has long echoes in precolonial Indian history but to which the British contribution has been ignored. In the circles of the Hyderabad Contingent alone, we know of Colonel Wallace (d. 1809), whose tomb in the cantonment at Seroor became venerated by locals. As John Howison recorded in 1825, Wallace was

> so much beloved by the natives that they honoured him with an apotheosis, and now daily perform religious rites at his cemetery, where an officiating priest attends, and sometimes keeps a lamp burning during a great part of the night. His apparition, it is said, frequently walks round the [cantonment] lines at night; and the Sepoy sentries are in the habit of presenting arms at the time they expect it to pass before them.[3]

In India and elsewhere, the history of the colonial soldier has many more such strange tales to tell.

We have repeatedly seen the patronal and hierarchical relationship of the soldier with his holy men, and this too should be seen as a characteristic of the Islam of the barracks. Implicit in the Islamic notion of 'sainthood' (*wilāyat*) is a hierarchical model of differentiated humanity that stands in direct contrast to the egalitarian conception of mankind that underlay the Enlightenment origins of professional history. In the historical sensibility of his followers, the Muslim saint or *walī* was conceived as a person who, while part of the same spectrum of human life as other men nonetheless inhabited the far end of that chain of being and command that was closest to God. The position of 'closeness' (*qurbat*) of the *faqīr* to God that underpinned his intercessionary role was untenable to the democratising ideology of intrinsic human equality that fostered both Islamic reform and the liberal project of 'history'. But it was a model of the universe's order that cohered exactly with the hierarchical military world that the sepoy inhabited. The colonial barracks was not a world of men among equals but a hierarchical and segmented society of overlapping spheres of authority that were criss-crossed by the ethnic and religious subdivisions of the regiments and ranks. Two key characteristics emerge from this military environment that were key to the shaping of a barracks Islam. One was the vertical character of social relationships in which patronage or even simple help was dispensed up and down a clear chain of authority. The second was the encouragement of ethnic and religious identities under the rubric of regimental cohesiveness and tradition. In response to the basic structures of sepoy society, the religion of the barracks took the form of offering loyalty to (and seeking help from) a person the sepoy regarded as his (in this case, ontological) superior who was drawn from his own religious (as well as sometimes ethnic) group and jealously guarded as separate in the manner of a regimental mascot. The hierarchical social forces of the sepoy's world in this way elevated such madmen as Banē Miyān or such lawyers as Afzal Shāh into men made of undoubtedly different stuff from themselves. They were not only men of flesh and blood but also men of *barakat*; they were blessed men, venerated and set apart from the needy men who raised them.

Protection and promotion aside, there was also another area of sepoy life in which barracks Islam loomed large, and this was in the provision of pleasure through carnival 'holy days' and more regular forms of entertainment. As our sources so vividly describe, in Hyderabad the Islam of the Indian soldier found its principal expression through festivities and other social gatherings. These might take the form of providing the sedate

pleasures of the musical evening or the more raucous pleasures of the carnival. In either case, the legitimate symbols of Islam – the location of the musical *mahfil* at the tomb of a saint, the Muharram commemoration of the martyred Husayn – afforded an outlet for less respectable pastimes, whether in terms of the licence to dance and get high that characterised the Muharram defended by Afzal Shāh's followers, the hosting of prostitute (*tawāʾif*) dancers at the *mahfils* arranged by Banē Miyān, or the more quotidian pleasures of tea-drinking and *gānjā*-smoking that gathered round Bābā Jān. In such ways, barracks Islam formed the social and cultural nexus by which the sepoy could legitimately seek his R'n'R. Despite the centrality of pleasure to the sepoy's religion, the degree to which Islam was connected to what we might broadly term the carnivalesque has been greatly neglected, and, in considerable measure, this is due to the colonial Protestant formulations of 'religion' that informed Religious Studies as it developed in British and American universities in the aftermath of empire. These colonial Protestant attitudes also had an impact on sepoy religion itself, an issue which we will turn towards in a few pages.

With its ties to the barracks culture of India's Muslim soldiers, and its written expression in the vernacular texts we have used to resurrect it, there is finally another way of characterising 'barracks Islam'. Since the term *urdū* means literally an 'army camp' or 'barrack', in referring to the vernacular culture in which Muslim soldiers were the heroes of their local worlds, to the shaping institutional role of barracks life and to the linguistic medium that expressed the Islam of the barracks, what we have described in the previous chapters is ultimately nothing less than an *urdū islām*, an Islam of the soldiers' camp.

The promotion of barracks Islam

Having located the key characteristics of the Islam of the Hyderabadi sepoy in the demands he made of his religion for protection, promotion and pleasure, we must now summarise the means by which in Hyderabad at least the colonial army was able to promote such services and the men who provided them. To answer first in brief, the previous chapters have shown that the institutions of army life provided barracks Islam (and more specifically, the cults of the *faqīrs* around whom it was organised) first with wealth, second with a means of circulation and third with a respectable model for emulation. Let us now explain these processes in turn.

First, we have already noted the relative wealth of the sepoy in British service, assured of a regular salary and of a pension in his dotage. With his typically rural roots, the sepoy was in this sense something of an anomaly in

Indian society, quite different from the salaried Indian civil servants with their urban backgrounds. The sepoy combined the inherited culture of his country upbringing with the acquired culture of urban – more specifically cantonment – life in different parts of India (and eventually overseas). Through his regular pay, he earned not only prestige but also the basic economic power of patronising others. In this way, the sepoy's income formed the principal means by which he was able to exert his influence in India's religious economy. This was all the more true of the well-paid cavalrymen among whom Muslims predominated and who made up so many of Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān's followers. Even those cavalrymen whose debts acquired on entering their profession ensured that they could not offer their *faqīrs* support in cash could at least offer the prestige of a following of horse-riding men in uniform. And what a splendid uniform it was: in the words of an officer in the 1860s, 'the dress of the Irregular Cavalry [of the Hyderabad Contingent] is green, and consists of a long coat richly embroidered with gold, tight trousers, and long boots, with the native turban, and black accoutrements'.[4] Before the disintegration of the barracks Islam of the miraculous *faqīr* through the sepoy's exposure to the forces of religious modernity, his comparative wealth allowed him to patronise the supernatural men of influence with whom he and his comrades chose to align themselves. As we have seen with Afzal Shāh, such patronage might range from the petty cash offerings of *nazar* to paying for the food at a feast or musical gathering or even funding the construction of a mausoleum. It is through the recognition of such patronage that we can make sense of the reciprocity that underwrote this religious culture and of the transactional logic that assured satisfaction to both the providers and consumers of the *faqīrs*' supernatural services. This logic would have been all the more obvious to sepoys whose own careers were initially dependent on the patronage of their family members in order to enter the army, not least in its financial dimensions in those regiments in which cavalrymen were expected to provide their own horses. This is not to underestimate the sincere ties of affection by which *faqīrs* and their followers were also bound. It is rather that in this context the institutional influence of the army was felt more through patronage than emotion, and it was the financial element of this which paid for the *faqīrs*' mausolea, the upkeep of their family impresarios and ultimately the printing of the biographies we have inherited. In the end, the King's shilling bought the sepoys and their *faqīrs* a history, albeit one conceived very much in their own terms.

The second means by which the colonial army served to promote the *faqīr* cults was by providing them with a means of circulation. As we have seen with Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān, the diffusion of their fame was

enabled (and at the same time constrained) by the periodic redeployment of their followers around the different cantonments of the Nizam's State. From one military station to another, the name and fame of these *faqīrs* were carried by the stories of miraculous rescues and unexpected fortunes told by their followers on their tours of duty. The basic method of marketing these cults was the oral recommendation of gossip and banter, through the strange tales told in soldiers' dormitories to pass the nights with interest. (Here too the role of religion as entertainment raises its head.) By the same spoken means, the sepoys also promoted their *faqīr* protectors in the domestic realm of their wives and children, who, as we have seen earlier, they were able to 'buy in' to the protection of their *pādrīs* through the widespread practice of wholesale family initiations or pledges of allegiance (*bayʿat*) by which the *faqīrs* and their charges were bound together. Again, the *faqīr*'s integration into the sepoy's kinship network was a close reflection of the way employment in and allegiance to the colonial army was handed along the branches of the soldier's family. Given the long absences from home that were part of the sepoy life, what we see in these pledges of *faqīr* allegiance is the acquisition of a kind of supernatural life insurance that was all the more necessary in view of the fighting man's métier. Given the acts of charity to orphans and widows with which such cults were also associated, the dividends of this insurance were often of a mundane no less than miraculous form. *Faqīr* cults were after all social networks, and it is in this sense appropriate to think of the *faqīr*'s sepoy disciples as *pīr-bhāīs* ('patron-brothers'), the term used in Urdu to denote fellow disciples of the same holy man. As such, the cult of the *faqīr* served as an indigenous form of the workers' cooperatives and self-help societies that by the late nineteenth century were appearing among India's factory workers in forms that were no less influenced by traditional and colonial institutions than the cults of barracks.[5]

Underwriting the circulation of the *faqīrs*' fame were the stories that the soldiers told, the idioms and tropes of which form the very stuff of history with which this book has dealt. For all the freedom of the story to find its own winds of dispersal, the distribution of this repertoire of *faqīr* tales was structured by the social networks of the soldiers who recounted them. The cantonment towns to which the sepoys were deployed formed a distribution network for tales of the *faqīrs*' deeds that were delivered in a comparable manner to such other lightweight commodities as the sepoys' bullets and opium. Although Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān spent most of their religious careers in one place, there were also many wandering *faqīrs* whose lifestyles were no less itinerant than the soldiers', and it is conceivable that such holy men followed regimental deployments sufficiently closely as to have served as trophy camp-followers in a way that was not

dissimilar to the camp-following prostitutes with whom we have seen the *faqīrs* associating. By the second half of the nineteenth century, in Hyderabad, this distribution network was further enabled by the colonial infrastructure of railways and roads that linked the Contingent's cantonment towns together more efficiently and that in some cases enabled the circulation of a *faqīr*'s fame to spread beyond the barracks trail and along the new railway pilgrim networks of the late nineteenth century.[6] As we have seen, the mausoleum built for Afzal Shāh was fortunate in being located just a few hundred metres from the Qazipeth train station and within easy sight of travellers passing along the actual tracks less than 30 metres from the shrine. If the rewards were potentially greater, this was still a more random and riskier stratagem of attracting followers, and, in comparison, the sepoy market was a more secure and dependable one.

The third means by which the Army helped promote the *faqīr* cults of the Hyderabadi barracks was through a process of cultural fusion. This was through the provision of a prestigious model and nomenclature – and in some cases a more formal office – for the Muslim *pādrī*. As the deliberate copy of the British regimental 'padre', the invention of the Muslim *pādrī* affected a remodelling of Islamic authority after the example of the Christian army chaplain. We cannot stress enough the significance of this change of designation from the older and esteemed terminology of the *murshid*, *mawlānā* or *shaykh* to that of the *pādrī*: here the holy man long associated with the warriors of Muslim India was re-envisaged on the model of the Christian army chaplain. With the creation of the more formal office of the regimental *munshī* and *mawlwī*, the parallels between the Christian and Muslim religious class were given further institutional enhancement, though in practice such 'maulvis' were termed *pādrī* in the Hindustani of the British officer himself. This was no simple capitulation to colonial pressures but a reflection of the complex cultural negotiations of empire. For the prestige of the British padre – well paid, well fed and well respected – offered a model that not only Muslim religious leaders but also their followers could adapt to their own purposes. In claiming the name 'padre' for their own *faqīrs* – especially the drugged and dirty likes of Banē Miyān – the sepoys were claiming equal status for their own religious leaders in the face of evangelical pressures, as well as doing their bit from the lower ranks to turn the terms of empire on their heads. Here in the sepoys' daily life is a splendid example of Homi Bhabha's 'subversive mimesis'.[7] In each of these ways, the sepoys' relationship with the army served to promote the cults of the holy men to whom they were connected, *faqīrs* whose disciplining of the flesh in the pursuit of power formed an ascetic mirror image of the sepoy's own training.

The fourth and final means by which the army as institution promoted the fame of the *faqīrs* in Hyderabad was implicit in the tale-telling we have described above. This was through the army's provision of lingua franca by which such stories could be expressed and communicated to other soldiers, whose origins and mother tongues were often diverse. This lingua franca was the form of Urdu referred to in colonial usage as 'military Hindustani'. More practical and workaday than the polished and Persianised Urdu of the Muslim *literati*, this military Hindustani was the common language that the sepoy shared with his commanders right across the subcontinent. While scholars of Urdu literature have long paid attention to the influence of the Fort William College (founded in 1800) on the formation of modern Urdu prose, like the effect of the colonial army on Muslim life more generally, the interface between the spoken vernacular of military Hindustani and the written realm of Urdu has been entirely neglected.[8] Yet, as we have noted earlier in connection with Sita Ram Pandey's *From Sepoy to Subedar*, the argot and jargon of this military Hindustani also found its expression in 'literature', albeit of a neglected and literally subaltern kind. Although the Hindustani original of Sita Ram's work has never been traced, in the *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* on the life of Banē Miyān we find an excellent example of this interaction between military Hindustani and the older prose style of the biographical *tazkira*. For *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* abounds with the jargon of army life, from the native officer ranks of *jamaʿdār* and *risāladār* and the borrowed terms *plēg dūtī āfsar* and *kāntanmant majistrēt* to the loanword designation of the Muslim *pādrī* himself. In this text, as in the quoted words of retired sepoys in the *Afzal al-karāmāt* on Afzal Shāh, we catch something of the spoken language of Jack Sepoy himself. This 'Hindustani' was a lingua franca which the Indian soldier shared with both comrades and officers and which had its origin in the menagerie of men that the colonial army brought together (in Kipling's memorable phrase) from the ends of the earth. In this way, the language of the army formed a means of circulation for the tales of the *faqīr* padres. Through its contribution to a new era in the history of Urdu, it sounded a response to the medieval origins of Urdu as the earlier lingua franca of the 'military camp' or *urdū* that lent the language its name.[9]

The reform of barracks Islam

Chapters 1 and 2 have presented tableaux of events at two distinct periods of empire around 1850 and 1900. We might think of these periods as constituting an evangelical and a scientific moment in imperial history, in which the colonial critique – and control – of Indian

society and its religious expressions were given voice through two distinctive discourses, those seen most vividly in the diatribes of Brigadier Mackenzie at Bolarum and the cold prose of the asylum records. The final set of issues with which this book has been concerned is therefore the role of the colonial army in the reform of the Hyderabadi sepoy's Islam. The first of these issues represents the flip side to the role of 'military Hindustani' in the promotion of barracks Islam by which the army's promotion of literacy through such outlets as the native officers' examinations and the *Fawjī Akhbār* newspaper instigated a pattern of religious change. With the incentives towards sepoy literacy lent by promotion through the ranks and the daily proximity to the administrative culture of the colonial order, through military service literacy was gradually added to the cultural arsenal of soldiers in Hyderabad. For all his old prestige, before the latter part of the nineteenth century the Hyderabadi soldier was not typically literate, a reflection of both the rural roots of the sepoy and the older role of writing as a specialist trade. In the previous section we have seen how the promotion of a common 'Hindustani' language enabled the dissemination of stories advertising the deeds of the sepoys' *faqīrs*. But, as we have argued in Chapter 3, the access of sepoy religion to a new literate outlet that underlay the writing of such texts as *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* was also to expose the sepoy to the modernist ideology of book religion and religious reform, an Islam in which *faqīrs* were regarded as the same work-shy charlatans that British critics had long claimed. In the long term, one of the most important, if largely incidental, causes of the reform of barracks Islam was therefore the Army's role in Hyderabad in the spread of literacy (or, at least, respect for written authority) among its soldiers. This was not only achieved through the education of sepoys themselves but also through their wider exposure to a new kind of bureaucratic culture in which writing was central to military activity on a day-to-day basis in a way that was without precedent in India's past, lending to the act of writing (and to the masters of the written word in turn) a new level of respect. On a more explicitly religious level, the bureaucratic colonial mentality also found expression in the Contingent's employment of literate *munshīs* and *maulwīs* as an alternative to the frenzied *faqīrs* of old. We have seen something of a halfway house move in this direction in the case of Afzal Shāh's combination of legalistic book-learning with asceticism and miracle-working.

However, perhaps the most startling institutional way that we have seen the colonial army reshaping religious practice in Hyderabad was through its attitude towards 'madness' and its recourse to the new institution of the asylum. Although the threat posed to British prestige by the 'sepoy gone to seed' had long been recognised, such as through the establishment of the North

Indian asylum at Monghyr in 1795, the expansion of the asylum system in India coincided with the great Victorian age of confinement of the 1860s onwards. Although such 'native-only' asylums were closely linked to the army – and often, as at Nagpur, run by military doctors – their social remit was wider than the barracks. While 'mad' sepoys such as Banē Miyān or Tāj al-dīn might find themselves incarcerated, in statistical terms the greatest proportion of the asylums' inmates were the 'fakirs, mendicants and beggars' who featured prominently in their registers. The control exercised by the asylum over the tempestuous antics of former sepoys such as Banē Miyān was in this way part of a larger picture of colonial attempts to control the streets of India (particularly those of its 'model' cantonments) from what the CM or commanding officer regarded as the anti-social behaviour of *faqīrs* and other beggars. In all probability, it seems likely that in many cases of sepoy madness the army chose to deal with its own more discreetly, confining sepoys in cells or infirmaries within the compounds of the barracks themselves. If so, this may explain the anomaly of the claim made in *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* that Banē Miyān was sent under military escort to an asylum at Jalna, where there was certainly a large military station but where there is no record of a public asylum. While such episodes of sepoy madness may have been of limited number (alternatively, given the nature of the soldier's work they may not), their impact on wider society was amplified through the circulation of the grim tales of the 'madhouse' or *pāgalkhāna* like those associated with Banē Miyān and Tāj al-dīn. By the spread of such tales through not only the barracks but also society at large, the bark of the asylum proved louder than its bite. There was never even the remotest likelihood that the colonial state could incarcerate every shell-shocked sepoy or rowdy mendicant, even though in the cantonments the CM was empowered to use the gaol or lock hospital for what he considered breaches of the peace. Combined with the introduction of the workhouse for the undeserving (or 'self-abusing') poor, the threat that the authorities *could* incarcerate the mad or unruly had a literally sobering effect on public morality. In large part, the days of the raving and intoxicated *faqīr* who had long been the Hyderabadi soldier's last resort were numbered. The very ingenuity, by miracle or by wit, with which Tāj al-dīn and Banē Miyān were forced to elude their oppressors is proof in itself of the pressures they faced.

The debates surrounding sepoy madness and the asylum were closely related to the question of the control of traditional drug-use by Indians in the army and society at large. Partly under pressure from agitators of the Temperance Movement in Britain, from the 1880s the colonial government exerted vast effort and expense to collect data on the scale and effects of drug-use in India, particularly among such 'key workers' as the

soldier and the peasant agriculturalist, while temperance societies were spreading in the Indian Army as early as the 1850s. While many senior officials expressed a diplomatic ambivalence towards drug-use (sometimes framed in terms of *gānjā*'s beneficial effects on productivity), in matters of religion the issue was more clear: intoxication played no part in 'true religion', whether Muslim or Christian. The drug-using *faqīr* was by definition a 'charlatan' – a loan-word that even entered Persian and Urdu usage during this period – who clothed his degeneracy in the robes of religion. When combined with the rise of a new class of bourgeois Muslim reformers, this critique was to have tremendous implications in Hyderabad and beyond for the disciplining effects of 'religion' reconceived as a modern discourse. So successful has this notion of 'true religion' been in commentarial academic culture that the qualifier ('true') is typically implicit in the broader category ('religion'). This is especially the case with regard to Islam, whose inclusive realm was so reduced by the course of colonial history. It is now hard to conceive as 'religious' the use of opium, and dancing girls, mummers and transvestites, fish kebabs and body-skewering, spoofing and the almighty celebration of bedlam. But however misunderstood in past and present, such practices are central to understanding the *faqīrs*' popularity with their sepoy followers.

The fact remains that for the sepoy such activities were precisely those associated with the great festival of Muharram and the little holy days of the saintly weddings (*ʿurs*) celebrated in the 'native' towns of Qazipeth and Aurangabad a short walk from the Contingent's barracks. As we have seen in the rebellion that followed the cancellation of the sepoys' Muharram in 1855, this Islam of the carnivalesque was important enough to the Hyderabadi soldier as to be worth risking everything to rebel for. Here lay one of life's little ironies in the colonial army, for while Muslim holy days were recognised in deference to the sepoy's religious rights, the latter's behaviour on these occasions often fell short of their officers' ideas of what constituted 'religion'. Over time, this sense among some members of the officer class and wider colonial society that Indian soldiers were not even practising their own religion properly contributed to the incipient reform of sepoy religion. In the figures of such men as Brigadier Colin 'the Moolah' Mackenzie, the evangelicals surreptitiously made their influence felt in the Contingent no less than in other spheres of Hyderabadi life.[10] After all, the parade ground and the regimental market offered not only a secure environment for lampooning the natives' faith but also a colonial agora lending the Christian preacher a captive audience of Indians already accustomed to the displaced sounds of the white man's Hindustani. Whether of evangelical persuasion or not, the Christian padre set an institutionally powerful

example not only for his British troops but for the sepoys of the regiment as well.

In other parts of India, British officers were quite aware of the Indian Army's effect on sepoy religion. As Field-Marshal William Birdwood (1865–1951) noted with regard to his Sikh soldiers, 'The Indian Army does much to foster and keep pure the Sikh religion'; not least, he added, through its employment of a scripturalist *grānthī* to regularly read out from the *Gūru Grānth Sāhib* and instruct Sikh soldiers in its Gurmukhi script.[11] Institutionalised in khaki uniform, here was the Sunday School scripture-reading of the Victorian empire. Birdwood's words highlight the key difference between the likes of Banē Miyān and Afzal Shāh, the latter recognised with an office in the cantonment market (and possibly the offer of a land-grant from Resident Davidson), the former consigned to a cell in the asylum. After all, if British rule depended on the prestige of its army, what kind of example was set to the sepoys by a naked *faqīr* like Banē Miyān? With the smart pyjamas and neat turban that his biographer tells us Afzal Shāh always wore, and the more formal attire he dutifully donned on ceremonial occasions, Afzal Shāh was a figure much more in line with British notions of the padre.[12] Given the importance on the one hand of the colonial army as the employer of Muslims for over a hundred years in Hyderabad and the prestige of the individual sepoy among his own community on the other, any attempt by the army administration to shape the religious lives of its charges also had its effects on wider society. This remains a subject that has been scarcely examined, perhaps on the assumed grounds that the British were true to their official word of non-interference in religious matters, at least in the wake of the Sepoy Rebellion. But the degree to which colonial officialdom held true to its laissez-faire policy regarding 'religion' depended on what was recognised as rightfully belonging to this category. Here, as in other fields of the historiography of the British Empire, in both its evangelical and more tacit expressions, the Protestant character of the empire has been underexamined.[13]

The attempt to control the activities of Hyderabad's *faqīrs* reflected a more widespread sentiment that such figures were at the forefront of anti-colonial rebellions all over the subcontinent. As we saw in Chapter 2, *faqīrs* were widely implicated in the 1857 Rebellion, as well as in other uprisings before and after this date, in India no less than other parts of the empire. In the years after 1857, the *faqīr* became the epitome of the seditious native.[14] As the Scots missionary William Butler dramatically put the matter a few decades later, the *faqīrs* constituted a '"secret service" organised by the conspirators of the Sepoy Rebellion to convey their purposes and instructions'; and he added, 'a very efficient and devoted "service" it

proved to be'.[15] What we have seen of the *faqīrs*' careers suggests that Butler was only partly correct. For while *faqīrs* like Bābā Jān and Banē Miyān continued to work miracles for their sepoy followers as late as the 1920s, as the colonial state expanded its reach in the second half of the nineteenth century it employed various mechanisms to control the *faqīrs*, employing a range of legal and institutional methods to do so. In many respects, 1857 formed a turning point in the *faqīrs*' fortunes, a point after which they were forever marked with suspicion. Yet the situation was complex, and colonial control of religious matters was always tenuous and partial. As the careers of Banē Miyān and Tāj al-dīn show, some *faqīrs* with military connections were able to pursue successful if at times restricted careers long after the Rebellion.

Departures

If nothing else, *Islam and the Army in Colonial India* has brought to light the history of the Islam of the Hyderabad barracks. Whether the forces that shaped this sepoy religion similarly affected the religious world of Indian soldiers in other parts of the subcontinent must remain for others to judge. While this book has only been concerned with the period up to around 1930, certain broad contours appear clear, and these suggest a significant departure from the old ways. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, a new kind of Islam gathered momentum in Hyderabad, self-consciously 'modern', aligned to the findings of science and shaped by the sober values of an emergent bourgeoisie. As this literate and modernising religiosity spread among Hyderabad's civil elite, the *faqīrs*' long season in the sun began to turn.[16] At the same time that these changes were taking place, the Indian soldier was being exposed to modernity on a new scale (not least through service in two world wars) and the twin assault of colonial critique and Muslim reform breached the citadel of the sepoys' faith. In Hyderabad at least, the collusion of imperial attitudes with those of Islamic reform sounded the death knell of the old religion of the barracks. With the call for India's independence, new religious movements rose which led the relationship between Islam and the army in uncharted directions, combining the colonial models of the Salvation Army and the Indian Army to create new military/religious organisations. In Hyderabad, there was the paramilitary *Razākār* organisation established as an offshoot of the reformist Majlis-e-ittihād al-muslimīn (Council for Muslim Unity) to save Hyderabad's independence in the name of a modernised Islam.[17] In other parts of India new organisations offered further departures for the fusion of Islam and the army. For the uniformed pacifist soldiers of the Khudā-e-Khidmatgār (Servants of

God) on the North-West Frontier, this meant the creation of God-serving regiments of Muslim conscientious objectors to empire.[18] For the Khāksār Tahrīk (Khāksār Movement) founded by ʿInāyat Allāh Khān (1888–1963) in Lahore in 1930, it meant the creation of another shadow army, fusing Urdu martial idioms with the new nationalist fervour to stage mock battles and instil the military discipline to at once free the nation and purify its Islam.[19] In the decades after independence, it was no longer the ecstatic likes of Banē Miyān who won the widest loyalty of the Muslim soldiers of the subcontinent, but instead pious scripturalists of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat ('Missionary Society') or sober Sufi mentors like Zindapīr of Kohat.[20] The soldier and his Islam had changed. But in Afzal Shāh and Banē Miyān, we have seen how at the height of British power in India, Muslim holy men flourished and floundered through their relationship with the colonial soldier. Their shrines remain today as testament to how Islam intertwined itself with the military culture of the British Empire.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Revd W. B. Butler, *The Land of the Veda, being Personal Reminiscences of India* (New York: Philips & Hunt, 1871), pp. 191, 195.
2. For a critical reading of the genealogy of Sufism *qua* 'mysticism', see A. Christmann, 'Reclaiming Mysticism: Anti-Orientalism and the Construction of 'Islamic Sufism' in Postcolonial Egypt', in N. S. Green and M. Searle-Chatterjee (eds.), *Religion, Language and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
3. S. Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770–1830* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).
4. The sheer cost of the Indian Army and its forebears was in itself testament to the military's centrality to colonial society: by the end of the nineteenth century around 40 per cent of Government of India annual income was designated to the Army, even in peacetime. See D. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860–1940* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 192.
5. D. M. Peers, 'Contours of the Garrison State: The Army and the Historiography of Early Nineteenth Century India', in N. Cassels (ed.), *Orientalism, Evangelicalism and the Military Cantonment in Early Nineteenth Century India: A Historiographical Overview* (Lampeter: Edward Mellen Press, 1991), p. 104.
6. On the new military history of India, see especially Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company;* J. J. L. Gommans, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and High Roads to Empire, 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 2002); D. H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj;* D. M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in India, 1819–1835* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1995); W. R. Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and K. Roy, *Brown Warriors of the Raj: Recruitment and the Mechanics of Command in the Sepoy Army, 1859–1913* (Delhi: Manohar, 2008). For a useful overview, see K. Roy, 'Introduction', in K. Roy (ed.), *War and Society in Colonial India, 1807–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Recent work has begun to examine the roles of other marginal figures in imperial British warfare; see e.g., H. Rappaport, *No Place for Ladies: The Untold Story of Women in the Crimean War* (London: Aurum Press, 2007). For comparable studies in colonial African history, see T. H. Parsons, *Colonial Military Culture: The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1942–1964* (Oxford: James

Currey, 1999) and D. Peterson and A. Isaacman, 'Making the Chikunda: Military Slavery and Ethnicity in Southern Africa, 1750–1900', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, **36** (2003). On the influence of European military technology and organisation on social change in the wider colonial world, see D. B. Ralston, *Importing the European Army: The Introduction of European Military Techniques and Institutions into the Extra-European World, 1600–1914* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

7. On the role of medieval Mamluk soldiers in 'the dynamic process of constructing and reconstructing Islam', see J. P. Berkey, 'The Mamluks as Muslims: The Military Elite and the Construction of Islam in Medieval Egypt', in T. Philipp and U. Haarmann (eds.), *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). B. Fleming, 'Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks', in M. Rosen-Ayalon (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977) details the *dīwāns* of religious poetry, lives of the Prophet, *Fürstenspiegel* and mystical ascension (*mirʿāj*) texts copied by Turkish slave-soldiers as part of their education in such Cairene barracks as al-Arbaʿīn and al-Hawsh.
8. While its authenticity has been questioned, the classic exception is Sita Ram Pandey, *From Sepoy to Subedar: Being the Life and Adventures of a Native Officer of the Bengal Army Written and Related by Himself*, trans. and ed. J. T. Norgate and D. C. Phillott (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1911). For a recent exception, see D. E. Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War: Solders' Letters, 1914–18* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999). However, if neglected, other sepoy writings are extant, such as the amusing imperial travel narrative of ʿAbd al-Razzāk [sic], Jamaʿdār, *The Native Officer's Diary: The Diary kept by Abdur Razzak […] on his Tour of Duty to […] the Empress of India in the Imperial Institute at London* (Madras: Higginbotham and Co., 1894), translated from the original Urdu by the author with the help of a fellow cavalryman. Born in Vellore in 1861, ʿAbd al-Razzāq was one of eight Indian officers selected to travel to London to accompany the Queen-Empress Victoria on her opening of the Imperial Institute. At Windsor, the soldiers were met by Victoria's Indian *munshī*, ʿAbd al-Karīm, who welcomed them in Hindustani before two British old India hands took them on a tour of the castle and its collection of Indian loot (pp. 5–6). The Indian soldiers were later 'entertained' by a re-enactment of the recent British victory at Kabul (pp. 23–4), but rather more enjoyed the London Zoo and Madame Tussaud's. ʿAbd al-Razzāq was particularly pleased with the purchases he made at the Army & Navy Store (pp. 35–8).
9. See such foundational works as B. D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982); S. A. A. Rizvi, *Shah ʿAbd al-ʿAziz: Puritanism, Sectarian, Polemics and Jihad* (Canberra: Maʿrifat Publishing House, 1982) and F. C. R. Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860–1923* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974).
10. Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires*.
11. For a fuller explanation of this approach, see N. S. Green and M. Searle-Chatterjee, 'Religion, Language and Power: An Introductory Essay', in

N. S. Green and M. Searle-Chatterjee (eds.), *Religion, Language and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

12. G. Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, **32**, 2 (1990).
13. V. Lal, *The History of History: Politics and Scholarship in Modern India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003) and V. Narayana Rao, D. Shulman and S. Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600–1800* (New York: Other Press, 2003).
14. For an overview of the martial and supernatural traditions of early medieval Ksatriya rulers (which nonetheless belittles their credulity), see B. N. S. Yadava, 'Chivalry and Warfare', in J. J. L. Gommans and D. H. A. Kolff (eds.), *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia 1000–1800: Themes in Indian History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).
15. V. Bouillier, 'The Violence of the Non-Violent, or Ascetics in Combat', in D. Vidal, G. Tarabout and E. Meyer (eds.), *Violence/Non-Violence: Some Hindu Perspectives* (Delhi: Manohar, 2003); A. K. Dasgupta, *The Fakir and Sannyasi Uprisings* (Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi, 1992); N. Islam, 'The Contribution of Majnū Shāh to Fakīr and Sannyāsī Rebellion: An Appraisal', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, **54**, 1 (2006); D. H. A. Kolff, 'Sanyasi Trader-Soldiers', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, **8** (1971); D. N. Lorenzen, 'Warrior Ascetics in Indian History', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, **97** (1978); W. G. Orr, 'Armed Religious Ascetics in Northern India', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, **25** (1940); W. R. Pinch, 'Soldier Monks and Militant Sadhus', in D. Ludden (ed.), *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). Revisions of the entire debate on ascetic violence and the notion of an alternatively passive or pacifist 'Hinduism' are found in H. W. Bodewitz, 'Hindu *Ahimsa* and its Roots', in J. E. M. Houben and K. R. Van Kooij (eds.), *Violence Denied: Violence, Non-Violence and the Rationalization of Violence in South Asian Cultural History* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) and Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires*.
16. On the militarisation of the Sikhs, see R. Fox, *Lions of Punjab: Culture in the Making* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978) and Lorenzen, 'Warrior Ascetics in Indian History'.
17. H. Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) and T. T. Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab 1849–1947* (London: Sage, 2005), pp. 70–97.
18. Yadava, 'Chivalry and Warfare', pp. 90–1. The study of omens also formed an important part of Turco-Islamic military science in India, as seen in the treatise *Ādāb al-harb wa'l-shujā'a*, dedicated to the Delhi sultan Iltutmish (r. 607/1210–633/1236). See Muhammad ibn Mansūr Mubārak Shāh, *Le Traité iranien de l'art militaire, Ādāb al-harb wa-š-šaga'a, du XIIIe siècle: Introduction et édition en facsimilé (MS British Museum, Londres)*, ed. A. Zajaczkowski (Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1969), Ms. facsimile f.172v–f.176r.

19. A. Ahmad, ‘Epic and Counter-Epic in Medieval India’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, **83** (1963); G. A. Grierson, ‘The Popular Literature of Northern India’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, **1**, 3 (1920); Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy;* and R. C. Temple, *The Legends of the Punjab*, 3 vols. (Bombay: Educational Society’s Press, 1884–1901).
20. On the overlapping military arts of South Indian warriors, see R. Elgood, *Hindu Arms and Ritual: Arms and Armour from India, 1400–1865* (Delft: Eburon, 2004). Despite its strengths, Elgood’s study is uncritical in its acceptance of the categories of ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ soldiers, particularly in so far as military service has been shown to be one of the key modes of identity formation in pre-colonial India.
21. Fox, *Lions of Punjab;* and P. Brantlinger, ‘The Well at Cawnpore: Literary Representations of the Indian Mutiny of 1857’, in P. Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).
22. On the more antagonistic relationship between Islamic and military organisations in twentieth-century South-East Asia, see A. A. Samson, ‘Army and Islam in Indonesia’, *Pacific Affairs*, **44** (1971).
23. Documentation of several of the early treaties has been printed in C. U. Aitchison (ed.), *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sunnuds, Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, 7 vols. (Calcutta: Foreign Department Press, 1864), vol. V, pp. 1–118. For the Treaty of Subsidiary Alliance, see pp. 49–55. The fullest accounts of the reign of Nizām ʿAlī Khān are W. Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London: HarperCollins, 2002) and the rather dated K. Sajun Lal, *Studies in Deccan History* (Madras: Business Week Press, 1951).
24. Major Reginald George Burton, *A History of the Hyderabad Contingent* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1905); Lieut.-Col. E. A. W. Stotherd, *Sabre and Saddle* (London: Seeley Service, 1933) and Lieut.-Col. E. A. W. Stotherd, *History of the Thirtieth Lancers, Gordon’s Horse: Former Titles: 4th Nizam’s Cavalry; 4th Cavalry, Hyderabad Contingent; 4th Lancers, Hyderabad Contingent* (n.p. [Aldershot: Gale & Polden]: 1911). For a shorter overview of the Nizam’s armies, see M. Ashraf, ‘The Hyderabad Army, 1724–1950’, *Military Historical Society Bulletin*, **8** (1958) and **9** (1959). On earlier European officers in the Nizam’s service, see J. Sarkar, ‘General Raymond of the Nizam’s Army’, *Islamic Culture*, **7** (1933). By 1850 there were 9,397 Indians serving in the Contingent, under the command of eighty-four European officers.
25. Cf. Peterson and Isaacman, ‘Making the Chikunda’; and Ralston, *Importing the European Army*.
26. On the fortunes of Skinner’s Horse against a background of the establishing of a ‘uniform military system’ by the 1830s, see S. Alavi, ‘The Making of Company Power: James Skinner in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, 1802–40’, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, **30**, 4 (1993).
27. Capt. A. N. Scott, *Sketches in India; Photographic Pictures Taken at Hyderabad and Secunderabad, in the Madras Presidency* (London: Lovel Reeve, 1862), opposite plate xlix.

28. On the social history of the cantonment more generally, see T. Jacob, *Cantonments in India: Evolution and Growth* (Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1994).
29. See *Cantonments of Secunderabad and Bolarum* (map), scale 1:5,280 (Dehra Dun: Survey of India, 1901) and S. H. Bilgrami and C. Willmott, *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions*, 2 vols. (Bombay: Times of India Steam Press, (1883–4), vol. II, p. 386.
30. See *Hyderabad State Gazetteer* (Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series) (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1909), p. 119. The cantonment at Amba was itself known as Muminabad.
31. On these themes in colonial architectural projects, see W. J. Glover, 'Objects, Models, and Exemplary Works: Educating Sentiment in Colonial India', *Journal of Asian Studies*, **64**, 3 (2005).
32. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*.
33. J. Howison, *Foreign Scenes and Travelling Recreations*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1825), vol. II, pp. 154–5.
34. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, pp. 98–102.
35. See, however, Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*.
36. Peers, 'Contours of the Garrison State'.
37. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, p. 18.
38. On other aspects of sepoy-driven social change in rural India, see S. Alavi, 'The Company Army and Rural Society: The Invalid Thana, 1780–1830', *Modern Asian Studies*, **27**, 1 (1993).
39. On the similar interface between British administration and religious reform in colonial Sudan, see J. O. Voll, 'The British, the "Ulama", and Popular Islam in the Early Anglo-Egyptian Sudan', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, **2**, 3 (1971).
40. On the modernisation of these armies, see e.g., S. Cronin, *The Army and the Creation of the Pahlavi State in Iran, 1910–1926* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997); K. Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, his Army, and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and O. Moreau, 'La Réforme par le haut: experimentation de la réforme de l'armée dans le monde musulman méditerranéen', *Quaderni di Oriente Moderno*, **23**, 5 (2004).

1 TRADITIONS OF SUPERNATURAL WARFARE

1. Sir Thomas Walker Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1896).
2. R. M. Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur, 1300–1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).
3. See e.g., K. A. Nizami's review of *Sufis of Bijapur*, *Islamic Culture*, **53**, 4 (1979).
4. C. W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 99–105.
5. For studies of several such narratives from the Deccan, see N. S. Green, 'Stories of Saints and Sultans: Re-Membering History at the Sufi Shrines

of Aurangabad', *Modern Asian Studies*, **38**, 2 (2004) and N. S. Green, 'Who's the King of the Castle? Brahmins, Sufis and the Narrative Landscape of Daulatabad', *Contemporary South Asia*, **13**, 3 (2004).

6. V. Bouiller, 'The King and his Yogi: Prthivinarayan Śah, Bhagavantanath and the Unification of Nepal in the Eighteenth Century', in J. P. Neelsen (ed.), *Gender, Caste and Power in South Asia: Social Status and Mobility in a Transitional Society* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1991).
7. On the postcolonial political activities of such Hindu holy men, see P. van der Veer, *Gods on Earth: The Management of Religious Experience and Identity in a North Indian Pilgrimage Center* (London: Athlone Press, 1988).
8. Mrs Iris Portal, 'Song at Seventy', typescript, p. 56, in Portal Papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge.
9. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, 2 vols., trans. V. Ball (London: Macmillan and Co., 1889), vol. II, pp. 81–4. The quotation is also cited in Pinch (2006), *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires*, pp. 67–8, who has argued that these were *yōgīs* rather than Muslim *faqīrs*. However, given Tavernier's express remark that they were Muslims, and the affinity of his description with accounts of warrior Sufis elsewhere in India, I see no reason to doubt Tavernier's own claim that these were indeed Muslim *faqīrs*. See also J. Gommans, *Moghal Warfare* (London: Routledge, 2002), especially pp. 48–51.
10. For studies of *faqīr* weaponry, see J. W. Frembgen, *Kleidung und Ausrüstung islamischer Gottsucher: Ein Beitrag zur materiellen Kultur des Derwischenwesens* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), pp. 123–57 and A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, 'The Tabar of a Turkish Dervish', in R. Elgood (ed.), *Islamic Arms and Armour* (London: Scholar Press, 1979). The role of talismanic and other Islamic apotropaic devices on Iranian armour is discussed in L. P. Elwell-Sutton, 'Persian Armour Inscriptions', in R. Elgood (ed.), *Islamic Arms and Armour* (London: Scholar Press, 1979). While not strictly speaking a weapon, a resplendent elephant goad (*ankus*) inscribed in Our'ānic verses and dedicated to the Bijapuri Sufi Shāh Amīn al-dīn A'lā (d. 1675) is also discussed in S. C. Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), pp. 303–4. On weapons associated with Hindu ascetic warriors, see R. Elgood, *Hindu Arms and Ritual: Arms and Armour from India, 1400–1865* (Delft: Eburon, 2004); on *danda* pp. 67, 143; on *chakra* pp. 215, 239–41; on *trisūl* pp. 215, 265. For original accounts of the *chakra* in use during battle, see Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires*, pp. 61–2. On religion and Muslim weaponry in South-East Asia, see E. Frey, *The Kris: Mystic Weapon of the Malay World* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), especially pp. 12–22 on the dagger's supernatural qualities.
11. The *Shāhnāma* image is reproduced in R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), frontispiece.
12. L. A. Ferydoun van Waalwijk van Doorn and G. M. Vogelsang-Eastwood (eds.), *Sevruguin's Iran: Late Nineteenth Century Photographs of Iran from the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, the Netherlands* (Tehran and Rotterdam: Barjesteh and Zaman, 1999), pp. 38, 45, 47. Such sartorial pelts also bore a parallel history in European martial tradition, which, despite

their medieval antecedents in the Crusades, experienced a flamboyant revival with the greater availability of tiger and leopard skins under the British Empire.

13. Mahmūd Awrangābādī, *Malfūzāt-e-Naqshbandiyya: Hālāt-e-Hazrat Bābā Shāh Musāfir Sāhib* (Hyderabad: Nizāmat-e-ʿUmūr-e-Mazhabī-e-Sarkār-e-ʿĀlī, 1358/1939), p. 37. Probably the most curious case of a supernatural animal in British military history is that of Boy, the white poodle of Prince Rupert of the Rhine. Boy was regarded by many Roundheads as the Prince's devilish familiar, capable of rendering himself invisible to spy on the forces of Parliament. In 1644, he was killed in (presumably visible) action at Marston Moor.
14. On the cultivation of feral qualities by medieval Muslim soldiers in the Turkic environments from which such arcane technologies may have been transmitted to India, see J. Baldick, *Animal and Shaman: Ancient Religions of Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000) On the bestowing of feral nicknames on medieval Muslim soldiers, see R. Dankoff, 'Animal Traits in the Army Commander', *Journal of Turkish Studies*, **1** (1977).
15. On *bāgh-nakh* and similar theriomorphic weapons, see Elgood, *Hindu Arms and Rituals*.
16. The connection of the two figures also occurs in written sources. In his *masnawī* poem *Fakhriyyat al-Nizām*, Nizām al-Mulk's own grandson ʿImād al-Mulk Fīrūz Jang III (d. 1215/1800) claimed that Nizām al-Mulk had undertaken a Sufi initiation (*bayʿat*) at the hands of Nizām al-dīn. See ʿImād al-Mulk Ghāzī al-dīn Khān, *Masnawī-ye-Fakhriyyat al-Nizām*, Ms., pp. 92–3. I have consulted a copy held at the shrine of Nizām al-dīn in Aurangabad.
17. Modern-day narrators add the exegesis that now always accompanies this tradition by explaining that as the *faqīr* had symbolically predicted, the dynasty of Nizām al-Mulk ended two centuries later in 1948 with the seventh of his descendants to rule with the title of Āsaf Jāh. For versions of the tradition, see Green, 'Stories of Saints and Sultans'; N. Luther, *Hyderabad* (Delhi: Government of India Publications Division, 1997), pp. 6–7; and M. Z. A. Shakeb, 'The Role of the Sufis in the Changing Society of the Deccan, 1500–1750', in L. Lewisohn and D. Morgan (eds.), *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. III, *Late Classical Persianate Sufism (1501–1750)* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), p. 375.
18. Note how here historical agency is taken away from kings – for it was the Emperor Farukh Siyar who had awarded the title of Nizām al-Mulk in Delhi in 1125/1713 – and put into the hands of the saints.
19. Sayyid Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī Qādirī, *Mishkāt al-nabuwwa*, Urdu translation by Abūʾl Fazl Sayyid Mahmūd Qādirī, 8 vols. (Hyderabad: Iʿjāz Printing Press, 1982), vol. VII (*mishkat* 31), pp. 113–15. For oral versions, see Green, 'Stories of Saints and Sultans'.
20. Green, 'Stories of Saints and Sultans'.
21. Zahir ul-Islam Naqshbandi, brother of the current *sajjāda nashīn* of Shāh ʿInāyat, interview, Balapur, 28 September 2000. Shāh ʿInāyat Allāh (d. 1117/1705) studied in Burhanpur before settling in Balapur where he founded his *khānaqāh* in 1059/1649. See Hādī Naqshbandī, *Rūh al-ʿInāyat* (Balapur: Rashid Book Depot, 1417/1996).

22. Long sections of Mansārām's text are translated in P. S. M. Rao, *Eighteenth Century Deccan* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1963), pp. 46–131. On the *faqīr*, his prediction and insignia, see p. 95.
23. On the connection of Shāh ʿInāyat Allāh to both the Mughal army and the Maratha warrior Shīvājī, see Naqshbandī (1417/1996), pp. 17–18.
24. This version is recorded in D. Prasad, *Saints of Telangana* (Hyderabad: Abul Kalam Azad Oriental Research Institute, 1969), pp. 11–12.
25. D. DeWeese, 'Sacred History for a Central Asian Town: Saints, Shrines and Legends of Origin in Histories of Sayrām, 18th to 19th Centuries', *Révue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, **89–90** (2000) and C. S. Taylor, 'Sacred History and the Cult of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt', *Muslim World*, **80**, 2 (1990).
26. Muhammad Ali, 'Ahmad Shāh Bābā: Father of the Nation', *Afghanistan*, **18** (1963). For similar legends, see also A. A. Kohzad, 'Huits légendes concernant la fondation de la ville de Herat', *Afghanistan*, **4** (1951).
27. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab al-Lubāb: Khafi Khan's History of ʾAlamgir*, trans. S. Moinul Haq (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1975), pp. 13 and 544–5.
28. Bouiller 'The King and his Yogi'.
29. D. White, 'The Exemplary Life of Mastnāth: The Encapsulation of Seven Hundred Years of Nāth Siddha Hagiography', in F. Mallison (ed.), *Constructions Hagiographique dans le monde indien: Entre mythe et histoire* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 2001).
30. Meer Husain Ali Kirmani, *Tazkirath-ul-Bilad wal Hukkam*, trans. S. A. Shariff (Mysore: Aftab-e-Karnataka Press, 1996), pp. 252–4.
31. Ghulām ʿAlī Qādirī, vol. VII (*mishkat* 31), pp. 113–15 and ʿAbd al-Jabbār Khān Malkāpūrī, *Mahbūb-e-Zūʾl-minan: Tazkira-e-Awliyā-e-Dakan* (Hyderabad: Hasan Prēs, 1331/1912), pp. 1097–8.
32. Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrár-i khudí): A Philosophical Poem*, trans. R. A. Nicholson (Lahore: Sh. Muhammed Ashraf, 1955), verses 1353–8, p. 119. The emperor and dervish Iqbāl had in mind here were Shāh Jāhān and Miyān Mīr Walī (d. 1045/1635).
33. J. Hutton, *A Popular Account of the Thugs and Dacoits: The Hereditary Garotters and Gang-Robbers of India* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1857), pp. 27–8. Contrary to popular belief, Hutton shows that a large proportion of the Thugs were Muslim; one Muslim informant claimed that Muslim Thugs understood the goddess Bhawanī as another name for the Prophet's daughter, Fātima (Hutton, *A Popular Account of the Thugs and Dacoits*, p. 11). Another bandit organisation discussed by Hutton was said to revere a trinity comprising Rāma, Bhawanī and the Sufi saint Bābā Farīd (Hutton, *A Popular Account of the Thugs and Dacoits*, p. 149). This evidence would seem to echo the emerging perspective on the armed band as an 'open-status' social group absorbing persons of all backgrounds and reinventing their identities in the process.
34. Hutton, *A Popular Account of the Thugs and Dacoits*, p. 161.
35. For initially drawing my attention to the overlap with Thugee I am indebted to V. Kaushik, 'Faqirs and Darveshes in Hyderabad during the Nizam's Rule', *History Today: Journal of the Indian History and Culture Society*, **1** (2000) and Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires*, pp. 235, 257.

36. However, as D. H. A. Kolff has written in this context, ‘The austere wanderer was not a *samnyasī* or renouncer, because at the proper time his accumulated ascetic power was to be used in the world, whether in battle or in fathering his children after his return home.’ See D. H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 199.
37. On widespread legends placing the Mongol invasions under various forms of *faqīr* agency, see D. DeWeese, ‘“Stuck in the Throat of Chingīz Khān”: Envisioning the Mongol Conquests in Some Sufi Accounts from the 14th to 17th Centuries’, in J. Pfeiffer and S. A. Quinn (eds.), *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006). On supernatural warriors elsewhere, see Baldick, *Animal and Shaman;* S. Harnesson, *The Berserkers: Teutonic Cult of the Shape-Shifter Warriors* (Reading: Coxland, 1994); and C. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
38. For useful anthropological studies of clientship, see J. Boissevain, ‘Patronage in Sicily’, *Man*, **1**, 1 (1966) and S. M. Lyon, *An Anthropological Analysis of Local Politics and Patronage in a Pakistani Village* (Lampeter: Edward Mellen Press, 2004). However, see also the classic study of P. Brown, ‘The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity’, *Journal of Roman Studies*, **61** (1971) and Brown’s own Islamic inspiration, E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).
39. On patronal Sufi ‘protection’ (*himāyat*) in pre-colonial Central Asia, see J. Paul, ‘Forming a Faction: The *Himāyat* System of Khwaja Ahrar’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, **23** (1991).
40. On the comparable role of the Army in the circulation of rural Sikhs throughout the British Empire, see D. Singh Tatla, ‘Rural Roots of the Sikh Diaspora’, in I. Talbot and S. Thandi (eds.), *People on the Move: Punjabi Colonial and Postcolonial Migration* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004).
41. This is not to deny the ideological collusion of Protestant Christianity with military aggression, for the theological heresy of the direct miracle did not preclude divine *providence* from ensuring that a particular Christian army should conquer its foes. In this connection, the Methodist role in the ideology of the US Army is interesting. See K. M. Mackenzie, *The Robe and the Sword: The Methodist Church and the Rise of American Imperialism* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1961).
42. On the religious history of the British Christian soldier, see M. Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion: The Forgotten History of the British Soldier from the Age of Marlborough to the Eve of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2005).
43. P. Middleton Brumwell, *The Army Chaplain: The Royal Army Chaplains’ Department: The Duties of Chaplains, and Morals* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1943), p. 71.
44. For a full study of the debate over miracles in post-Reformation Britain, see J. Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006).

45. Several inconclusive essays on colonial evangelicalism and the 'politics of providence' in India after the Great War are found in G. Studdert-Kennedy, *Providence and the Raj: Imperial Mission and Missionary Imperialism* (London: Sage, 1998).
46. On the ideology and training of the American military chaplain, see C. L. Abercrombie, *The Military Chaplain* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1977).
47. H. C. Day, *An Army Chaplain's War Memories* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1937). It is tempting to compare Day's Anglo-Catholicism with the famous (and apocryphal) utterance of Phillip II when storms brought defeat to his Armada in 1588: 'Dios es ingles!'
48. Day, *An Army Chaplain's War Memories*, p. 182, original italics. On the ideological background to these thoughts, see P. Porter, 'New Jerusalems: Military Chaplains and the Ideal of Redemptive Sacrifice in the Great War', unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2003.
49. Rudyard Kipling, *War Stories and Poems*, ed. A. Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 74.
50. A. A. Samson, 'Army and Islam in Indonesia', *Pacific Affairs*, 44 (1971), p. 564.
51. Committee of Enquiry upon the Army and Religion, *The Army and Religion: An Enquiry and its Bearing upon the Religious Life of the Nation* (London: Macmillan & Co. Limited, 1919). Details of the attendees, and the circumstances of the meetings, are at the beginning of the text. The leap from Lady Margaret Hall to India was not actually so far at all and in 1902 Edith Langridge (1864–1959), former Vice-Principal of the college, founded the Oxford Mission Sisterhood of the Epiphany in India.
52. Committee of Enquiry upon the Army and Religion, *The Army and Religion*, p. 163. In a poignant cross-cultural detail, the same soldier commented on the 'remarkable popularity' of the poems of Omar Khayyam among British soldiers in the trenches. Committee of Enquiry upon the Army and Religion, *The Army and Religion*, p. 162.
53. For a recent reappraisal of the significance and debate around miracles in the Great War, see K. Finlay, 'Angels in the Trenches: British Soldiers and Miracles in the First World War', in K. Cooper and J. Gregory (eds.), *Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church* (Woodbridge: Ecclesiastical History Society, 2005). More generally, see Porter, 'New Jerusalems', and M. Snape, 'Keeping Faith and Coping: Belief, Popular Religiosity and the British People in Two World Wars', in P. Liddle, T. Whitehead and J. Bourne (eds.), *The Great World War 1914–45*, vol. II, *The People's Experience* (London: Harper Collins, 2001).

2 THE PADRE AND HIS MIRACULOUS SERVICES

1. Sayyid Shāh Darwīsh Muhyī al-dīn Sāhib Qādirī, *Afzal al-karāmāt maʿ karāmāt-e-sarwarī* (Hyderabad: Barakat Publications, 1402/1981), henceforth *Afzal*. This edition was prepared by Muhyī al-dīn's son, Muhammad Murtazā Qādirī, with details of the original completion of the text in 1913 on p. 161. I have been unable to locate a copy of the original edition, though its existence

is attested in quotations from the text that are found in the *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* on the life of Afzal Shāh's follower Banē Miyān (the main subject of Chapter 3) that was written in Aurangabad around 1921. See Muhammad Ismāʿīl Shāh Qādirī, *Aʿzam al-karāmāt* (Aurangabad: Muʿīn Press, n.d. [*c.* 1340/1921]), henceforth *AK*.

2. On Sarwar Biyābānī, see *Afzal*, pp. 135–61. I am grateful to Syed Shujathullah of the shrine of Afzal Shāh at Qazipeth for details on the life of Muhyī al-dīn Darwēsh.
3. *Afzal*, pp. 13–26 (*muqaddima*), 27–64 (*bāb awwal*). On the genres of Muslim biography, see M. Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: The Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Maʾmūn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); M. K. Hermansen, 'Religious Literature and the Inscription of Identity: The Sufi Tazkira Tradition in Muslim South Asia', *The Muslim World*, **87**, 3–4 (1997) and J. N. Sarkar, 'Historical Biography in Medieval Indian (Persian) Literature', in S. P. Sen (ed.), *Historical Biography in Indian Literature* (Calcutta: Calcutta Institute of Historical Studies, 1979).
4. On whom, see O. Khalidi, 'The Arabs of Hadramawt in Hyderabad: Mystics, Mercenaries and Money-Lenders', in A. R. Kulkarni, M. A. Nayeem and T. R. De Souza (eds.), *Medieval Deccan History: Commemoration Volume in Honour of P. M. Joshi* (Delhi: Popular Prakashan, 1996).
5. A decade before the writing of *Afzal al-karāmāt*, a short account of the life of Ziyā al-dīn was written in Delhi in Imām al-dīn Ahmad, *Barakāt al-awliyā* (Delhi: n.p., 1322/1905), pp. 123–4. Like the author of *Afzal al-karāmāt*, Imām al-dīn Ahmad also drew on the *Panj ganj*. While Imām al-dīn Ahmad's text detailed the lives of many Hyderabadi Sufis (including figures who died as late as 1322/1904), there is no mention in the text of Afzal Shāh. Since Imām al-dīn seems to have relied solely on literary sources for his biographical notices, it seems likely that the reason for Afzal Shāh's absence lies in the fact that his biographical *Afzal al-karāmāt* had not been completed by the time Imām al-dīn was writing.
6. On Sayyid Fāzil, see *Afzal*, pp. 20–2, 27 and Malkāpūrī (1331/1912), pp. 953–5. Details on Sayyid Fāzil's son, Qāzī Shāh Afzal (d. 1193/1779) are found in ʿAbd al-Jabbār Khān Malkāpūrī, *Tazkira-e-Awliyā-e-Dakan* (Hyderabad: Hasan Press, 1331/1912), pp. 96–9. Since I have not had access to the *Panj ganj*, this information also draws upon Mīr Munawwar ʿAlī, *Ziyā-e-Biyābānī* (n.p: n.d.), which contains an extensive summary of the *Panj ganj*, and the website of the Biyābānī shrine and family, which also contains accounts of Afzal Shāh that draw on *Afzal al-karāmāt*. See http://www.afzalbiabani.org/.
7. A similar case was the family of Shāh ʿInāyat Allāh (d. 1117/1705), a noted Naqshbandī Sufi of Balapur in the north of the Nizam's State, who were previously connected with the Mughal Army. Their splendid *khanaqah* included a special balcony known as the 'place of law' (*dār al-sharʿ*) from which the head of the family would issue *fatwās* on local disputes. ʿInāyat Allāh's family remained important right through the Nizams' period. On the shrine, see N. S. Green, 'Auspicious Foundations: The Patronage of Sufi Institutions in the Late Mughal and Early Asaf Jah Deccan', *South*

Asian Studies 20 (2004), pp. 75–7; on the family, see Malkāpūrī (1331/1912), pp. 613–34, 861–72, 906–14, 931–5, 937–48.

8. The wealth no less than piety of Hyderabad's provincial elites may also be deduced from Warangal's carpet industry which, though introduced by Iranian immigrants much earlier, flourished during the eighteenth century to produce some of the finest (and now, sadly, rarest) durbar carpets and prayer rugs ever to be produced in India. See D. Walker, *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1998), pp. 129–50.
9. On similar patterns of inheritable *barakat* and social order in North Africa, see R. Ensel, *Saints and Servants in Southern Morocco* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) and R. Jamous, *Honneur et Baraka: Les structures sociales traditionelles dans le Rif* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981), especially Chapter 10.
10. A short biography of Ghulām Muhyī al-dīn also appears in the *Barakāt al-awliyā*, where his death date is given as 1220/1805. Imām al-dīn reported that Ghulām Muhyī al-dīn studied in Aurangabad before traveling to North India, where he studied under the great Mirzā Mazhar Jān-e-Jānān (d. 1195/1780) and Fakhr al-dīn Chishtī (d. 1199/1785), before finally returning to the Deccan to found a madrasa. However, it is not entirely clear if this is the same Ghulām Muhyī al-dīn. See Imām al-dīn Ahmad, *Barakāt al-awliyā*, pp. 179–80.
11. Cf. Richard Eaton's description of the acculturation of Jats to Islam at the shrine of Bābā Farīd in Punjab in R. M. Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Bābā Farīd', in B. D. Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984). Nonetheless, *Afzal al-karāmāt* took care to clarify and defend the place of Hindus in the cult of Afzal Shāh *as Hindus*, recounting several episodes from the life of the *faqīr* in which his friendship towards his Hindu followers was not dependent on their conversion to Islam.
12. *Afzal*, p. 33. On Hanamkonda cantonment, and the Contingent's suburb there known simply as Lashkar ('Army'), see S. H. Bilgrami and C. Willmott, *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions*, 2 vols. (Bombay: Times of India Steam Press, 1883–4), vol. II, p. 750.
13. *Afzal*, pp. 33–4.
14. *Afzal*, pp. 39–42.
15. *Afzal*, p. 46. On Mawlwī Qutb al-dīn, who had migrated to Hyderabad from Delhi, see Ghulām Husayn Khān *Tārīkh-e-Āsaf Jāhiyān: Gulzār-e-āsafiyya*, ed. M. Mahdī Tawasolī (Islamabad: Markaz-e-tahqīqāt-e-fārsī-ye-īrān wa pākistān, 1377/1999), pp. 416–17.
16. On Ghulām ʿAlī Qādirī, see Ghulām Husayn Khān, *Tārīkh-e-Āsaf Jāhiyān*, pp. 377–9 and Murād ʿAlī Tulūʿ, *Tazkira-e-awliyā-e-haydarābād* (Hyderabad: Mīnār Buk Dīpō, 1392/1972), pp. 110–13.
17. *Afzal*, pp. 28–9.
18. *Afzal*, pp. 49–53.
19. Sake Dean Mahomet, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet: An Eighteenth-Century Journey through India*, ed. M. H. Fisher (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1997), p. 94.

20. *Afzal*, pp. 54–7, 60–1.
21. *Afzal*, pp. 61–2. On these two Sufis, see J. Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (London: Tauris, 1989), pp. 44–46, 55.
22. *Afzal*, pp. 35–6; also oral communication, Syed Shujathullah, shrine of Afzal Shāh, Qazipeth, July 2005.
23. *Afzal*, p. 49. I have been unable to trace the latter work.
24. On peasant life in the rural Deccan during Afzal Shāh's lifetime, see N. Champakalakhshmi, *The Economic and Social Life of the Peasantry in the Deccan in the Nineteenth Century* (Hyderabad: Abul Kalam Azad Oriental Research Institute, n.d.), especially pp. 174–232 on peasant (albeit largely non-Muslim) religious practices. On the *qasbas* of the north, see C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion 1770–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
25. On similar social formations in Central Asia at this time, see D. DeWeese, 'The Politics of Sacred Lineages in 19th-Century Central Asia: Descent Groups Linked to Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi in Shrine Documents and Genealogical Charters', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, **31**, 4 (1999).
26. An early example of such a self-consciously modern and democratic Sufi organisation was the Anjoman-e-ukhuwwat ('Society of Brotherhood') founded in Tehran in 1899 among the followers of Safī ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1316/1899), who visited Hyderabad in the 1860s. On this organisation, see ʿA. Anwar, 'Anjoman-e Okowwat', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
27. On the life of Maʿshūq Rabbānī, see Muhammad ʿAlī Khān Mujaddidī, *Fayzān-e-awliyā* (Hyderabad: Dāʾira Prēs, n.d.), pp. 27–33.
28. *Afzal*, p. 79.
29. For further accounts of the Rifāʿīs, see A. Popovic, *Un ordre de derviches en terre d'Europe: la Rifâʿiyya* (Lausanne: Age d'homme, 1993) and A. Popovic, 'La Rifâʿiyya', in A. Popovic and G. Veinstein (eds.), *Les Voies d'Allah* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).
30. Charles Chenevix Trench, *Viceroy's Agent* (London: Cape, 1987), p. 199. I am grateful to Omar Khalidi for this reference.
31. In the following section I am indebted to the leads provided in O. Khalidi, 'The Rifāʿī Sūfī Order and the Faqīrs in India', *Hamdard Islamicus*, **25**, 2 (2002).
32. Khalidi, 'Maulānā Mawdūdī and Hyderabad', p. 76.
33. E. H. Hunt, 'The Rafai Fakeers of Hyderabad', *Man*, **50–1** (1932) and the photographs preserved in Papers of Edmund Henderson Hunt, Oriental and India Office Collections, Private Papers, Mss. Eur. F222/47.
34. Hunt, 'The Rafai Fakeers of Hyderabad', p. 46.
35. Sayyid Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī Qādirī, *Mishkāt al-nabuwwa*, Urdu translation by Abūʿl Fazl Sayyid Mahmūd Qādirī, 8 vols. (Hyderabad: Aʾjāz Printing Press, 1982), vol. IV, pp. 67–76.
36. *Afzal*, pp. 49–57.
37. On such rivalries, see D. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860–1940* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 76–112.

38. Major Reginald George Burton, *A History of the Hyderabad Contingent* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1905), Lieut.-Col. E. A. W. Stotherd, *Sabre and Saddle* (London: Seeley Service, 1933) and Lieut.-Col. E. A. W. Stotherd, *History of the Thirtieth Lancers, Gordon's Horse: Former Titles: 4th Nizam's Cavalry; 4th Cavalry, Hyderabad Contingent; 4th Lancers, Hyderabad Contingent* (n.p: n.p. [Aldershot: Gale & Polden], 1911).
39. E. Polehampton and T. S. Polehampton (eds.) *A Memoir, Letters and Diary of the Rev.d Henry S. Polehampton, M. A., Chaplain of Lucknow*, 3rd edn (London: Richard Bentley, 1859), p. 215.
40. Polehampton and Polehampton, *Memoir, Letters and Diary*, p. 223.
41. Capt. Gregory Rich, IA, *The Mutiny in Sialkot* (Sialkot: Handa Printing Press, n.d. [1924]), p. 25. On later British soldiers' supernatural experiences, see K. Finlay, 'Angels in the Trenches: British Soldiers and Miracles in the First World War', in K. Cooper and J. Gregory (eds.), *Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church* (Woodbridge: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 2005).
42. On these issues, see A. Christmann, 'Reclaiming Mysticism: Anti-Orientalism and the Construction of "Islamic Sufism" in Postcolonial Egypt', in N. S. Green and M. Searle-Chatterjee (eds.), *Religion, Language and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
43. *Afzal*, pp. 76–80.
44. On the visits to a *faqīr* outside the Monghyr garrison by the earlier North Indian sepoy Dīn Muhammad and his fellow soldiers in 1771, see Sake Dean Mahomet, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet*, pp. 49–50.
45. See P. Davies, *The Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India*, vol. II, *Islamic, Rajput, European* (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 503.
46. On the slightly earlier Hyderabadi soldier-ecstatic Jamaʿdār Sāhib ('Sir Sergeant', d. 1255/1839), who also gave up his family and his service in the Hyderabad military in a state of ecstatic distraction, see Tulūʿ (1392/1972), pp. 92–5. On British mental illness in India, see W. Ernst, *Mad Tales from the Raj: The European Insane in British India, 1800–1858* (London: Routledge, 1991).
47. S. Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770–1830* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 143–54.
48. *Karāmāt-e-sarwarī*, co-published in *Afzal*, pp. 135–61.
49. This account is based on the oral tradition preserved by the shrine attendants. In 1993, a mausoleum was built over his grave in the fulfilment of a vow; the tongs are kept on display there. The tongs are closely related to the *chimta* carried by wandering *faqīrs* and *sādhūs* in other regions of India, which were used to create a rhythm for song and dance and to announce a dervish's arrival in a village. See J. W. Frembgen, *Kleidung und Ausrüstung islamischer Gottsucher: Ein Beitrag zur materiellen Kultur des Derwischenwesens* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), pp. 174–5.
50. This account was related to me at Qazipeth in July 2005 by Syed Shujathullah, who heard the story from his grandfather. In addition to Indian Army troops, both the Deccan Horse and Hyderabad Lancers served in the First World War.

On Indian troops in the First World War more generally, see S. N. Saxena, *Role of Indian Army in the First World War* (Delhi: Bhavna Prakashan, 1987).

51. *Afzal*, pp. 71–3.
52. The Mīrzā seems to have been aided in this project by another sepoy devotee, Nāmdār Khān, whom *Afzal* later mentions as also being responsible for the mausoleum's construction (pp. 111–12). The original stone mausoleum was demolished in the late 1990s to make way for a larger replacement.
53. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, p. 98. On this humanist approach to saintly writings, see also G. Calasso, 'La Dimension religeuse individuelle dans les textes médiévaux, entre hagiographie et littérature de voyages: les larmes, les émotions, l'expérience', *Studia Iranica*, **91** (2000).
54. On such regulations, see Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, p. 84.
55. Simon Digby, *Sufis and Soldiers in Aurangzeb's Deccan* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001) and S. Faroqhi, *Peasants, Dervishes, and Traders in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1986).
56. For full details of the shrine and its patrons, see Green, 'Auspicious Foundations'.
57. *Afzal*, pp. 81–2.
58. These step-wells (*bāʾōlīs*), so crucial to the maintenance of life through the dry summers of the Deccan, formed an important ecological underpinning of all manner of religious traditions in Hyderabad. In the folklore of Qazipeth, the step-well at Afzal Shāh's shrine has come to be seen as having been built in a single night by the *jinn*. It also featured in another story in the text (*Afzal*, pp. 101–2).
59. On such travel miracles, see N. S. Green, 'Saints, Rebels and Booksellers: Sufis in the Cosmopolitan Western Indian Ocean, *c*. 1850–1920', in K. Kresse and E. Simpson (eds.), *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean* (London: Hurst, 2007).
60. On the modernisation of Hyderabad's communications, see O. Khalidi (ed.), *Memoirs of Cyril Jones: People, Society and Railways in Hyderabad* (Delhi: Manohar, 1991); S. Raj, *Medievalism to Modernism: Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Hyderabad, 1869–1911* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1987), pp. 145–74; and B. Ray, 'The Genesis of Railway Development in Hyderabad State: A Case Study in Nineteenth Century British Imperialism', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, **21**, 1 (1984).
61. This information is based on a British survey map of the state contained in Papers of Col. Cuthbert Davidson, Oriental and India Office Records: Private Papers, Mss. Eur. D728/5.
62. Papers of Col. Cuthbert Davidson, India Office Records: Private Papers, Mss. Eur. D728/5, pp. 12–13. Davidson was Resident of Hyderabad from 1857 to 1862. Having helped bring Sālār Jang to power, he went on to survive both the attack on the Residency in July 1857 and an attempted assassination of the Nizam's *durbar* less than two years later. See Cuthbert Davidson, in Buckland (1906) and O. Khalidi, *The British Residents at the Court of the Nizams of Hyderabad* (Wichita: Hyderabad Historical Society, n.d.), p. 10.

63. Before the advent of the railway, an army of mixed horse and foot in India could move at most around 12 miles per day. See Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, p. 200.
64. Sita Ram Pandey, *From Sepoy to Subedar: Being the Life and Adventures of a Native Officer of the Bengal Army Written and Related by Himself*, trans. and ed. J. T. Norgate and D. C. Phillott (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1911), p. 18.
65. Jaffur Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam, or the Customs of the Mussulmans of India*, trans. G. A. Herklots (Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1991 [1863]), pp. 266–72.
66. Shureef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, p. 182.
67. *Afzal*, p. 81.
68. Other stories relate to Afzal Shāh's intervention to prevent rains that had destroyed houses and possessions for eight days without respite and on another occasion to pray for rain during a drought (*Afzal*, pp. 95, 97–8).
69. Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, pp. 75–94 and Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, pp. 98–102.
70. *Afzal*, p. 82.
71. For a taste of such regional legends, see R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924); and M. Frere, *Old Deccan Days: or, Hindoo Fairy Legends Current in Southern India*, 2nd edn (London: J. Murray, 1870).
72. *Afzal*, pp. 84–5.
73. J. H. Brunvand, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends and their Meanings* (London: Pan, 1983) and Ahmad Yādgār, *Tārīkh-e-Shāhī* (*Tārīkh-e-Salātīn-e-Afāghīna*), ed. M. Hidayat Hosain (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1939), pp. 99–108 (sections also translated in S. Digby, *Wonder Tales of South Asia* (Jersey: Orient Monographs, 2000), pp. 234–40.
74. *Afzal*, pp. 87–8.
75. Rudyard Kipling, *War Stories and Poems*, ed. A. Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 98.
76. P. Meadows Taylor, *Sketches in the Deccan* (London, Charles Tilt, 1837), n.p.
77. *Afzal*, pp. 108–9.
78. Sītā Rām similarly recorded in his memoirs the occasion when a group of wild elephants attacked a group of sepoys. See Sita Ram Pandey, *From Sepoy to Subedar*, pp. 21–2.
79. 'Indian cavalry regiments have eight troopers mounted on camels, each squadron having two. They are used as dispatch riders.' See E. A. W. Stotherd, *Sabre and Saddle* (London: Seeley Service, n.d. [1933]), plate opposite p. 112.
80. E. Candler, *The Sepoy* (London: John Murray, 1919); for characteristics of the Pathan, see pp. 63–91.
81. *Afzal*, p. 89.
82. *Afzal*, pp. 89–90. On this rank, see 'Ressaldar', in H. Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms* (London: J. Murray, 1886).
83. *Afzal*, p. 106.

84. On this shrine, see V. Narayanan, 'Nagore: Dargah of Hazrat Shahul Hamid', in M. Currim and G. Michell (eds.), *Dargahs: Abodes of the Saints* (Bombay: Marg, 2004).
85. On Hyderabad's rail network, see Khalidi, *Memoirs of Cyril Jones;* for Qazipeth's North Indian rail connection, see p. 65.
86. On parallel processes in Hindu Orissa, see R. Ahuja, '"The Bridge-Builders": Some Notes on Railways, Pilgrimage and the British "Civilizing Mission" in Colonial India', in H. Fischer-Tiné and M. Mann (eds.), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India* (London: Anthem, 2004).
87. On other itinerant groups in colonial India, see C. Markovits, J. Pouchepaass and S. Subrahmanyam (eds.), *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750–1950* (London: Anthem, 2003).
88. *Afzal*, pp. 93–4.
89. In a different context, the American sociologist Rodney Stark has posited a similar model based on the spread of cults in modern America through the use of networks of family and friends, which he has argued may be applicable to a wide range of historical contexts. See R. Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
90. *Afzal*, p. 91.
91. On the dream life of an earlier Indian Muslim soldier, see S. Digby, 'Dreams and Reminiscences of Dattu Sarvani, a Sixteenth Century Indo-Afghan Soldier', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* **2**, 1 (1965).
92. *Afzal*, p. 92.
93. *Afzal*, pp. 102–3.
94. Sir Richard Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim, and Nepal*, 2 vols. (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1887), vol. I, p. 78. Around the same time as Nizām al-dawla's dreams, the eschatological dream of a little-known Arab shaykh caused sufficient stir among Muslims in Egypt and the Hijaz that British colonial intelligence reports also recorded its transmission. See J. G. Katz, 'Shaykh Ahmad's Dream: A 19th Century Eschatological Vision', *Studia Islamica*, **79** (1994).
95. *Afzal*, p. 116.
96. *Afzal*, pp. 109–10.
97. On such fish in the Deccan, see Green, '*Auspicious Foundations*'; and in Islam more generally, see A. Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 7, 21.
98. *Afzal*, pp. 98–9.
99. *Afzal*, p. 115.
100. On this process, see P. Werbner, '*Langar*: Pilgrimage, Sacred Exchange and Perpetual Sacrifice in a Sufi Saint's Lodge', in P. Werbner and H. Basu (eds.), *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults* (London: Routledge, 1998).
101. *Afzal*, p. 100.
102. *Afzal*, pp. 100–1.

103. *Afzal*, p. 77.
104. Perhaps the most vivid examples are the famous ‘rat children’ (*chūhā*), traditionally first-born children given by previously infertile mothers in fulfilment of *nazar* to the shrine of Shāh Dawlat in Gujrat, Punjab. On folk narrative associations of these children and the saint, see ‘The Chuhas, or Rat Children, of the Punjab and Shah Daula’, in S. Kumar and N. Kumar (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Folklore and Folktales of South Asia* (Delhi: Anmol, 2003).
105. *Afzal*, p. 104.
106. Details of many such acts of religious patronage from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Hyderabad may be found in S. A. A. Bilgrami, *Landmarks of the Deccan: A Comprehensive Guide to the Archaeological Remains of the City and Suburbs of Hyderabad* (Hyderabad: Government Central Press, 1927). Afzal Shāh’s contemporary Philip Meadows Taylor was characteristically outraged by what he saw as the trickery and waste of resources that underlay this economy of miracles. Writing of the acts of patronage to Muslim and Hindu holy men of the nineteenth century, Hyderabadi minister Chandū Laʿl, Meadows Taylor wrote in a letter of Chandū Laʿl’s ‘unscrupulous desire of money to squander away on all sorts of rascally Gossains, Byragees and Fakeers. Whoever pretended to see a vision of heaven in which Chundoo Lall was seated along with Hindoo or Mahomedan sages and holy persons, was sure to receive large presents, or, if the knave was a cleverer one than usual, he got a jahgeer (a village) of a thousand Rupees a year, settled on him for life.’ See P. Meadows Taylor, *The Letters of Philip Meadows Taylor to Henry Reeve*, ed. P. Cadell (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 117–18.
107. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, pp. 61–3.
108. *Afzal*, pp. 99–100.
109. This miracle was by no means unique, and a similar story was associated with the Aurangabad saint Shāh Nūr Hammāmī (d. 1104/1692), who outdid Afzal Shāh in transporting his courtly follower Diyānat Khān all the way to Delhi! The story was recounted in Zahūr Khān Zahūr, *Nūr al-anwār*, an Urdu translation of the sections of the *Khizān ū bahār* of Bāhāʾ al-dīn Hasan ʿUrūj (d. *c*. 1230/1814) relating to Shāh Nūr (Ms., Collection of Mohammad Abd al-Hayy, Aurangabad), p. 15. For more details, see N. S. Green, ‘Stories of Saints and Sultans: Re-Membering History at the Sufi Shrines of Aurangabad’, *Modern Asian Studies*, **38**, 2 (2004).
110. *Afzal*, pp. 103–4.
111. On pay rates in the Contingent during this period, see Stotherd, *History of the Thirtieth Lancers, Gordon’s Horse*, p. 22 (facing). On sepoy pay more generally, see K. Roy, *Brown Warriors of the Raj*. (Delhi: Manohar, 2008), pp. 145–156, 168.
112. On the most famous of such figures, see D. Holman, *Sikander Sahib: The Life of Colonel James Skinner, 1778–1841* (London: Heinemann, 1961). A good sense of the duties of the irregular cavalries may be gleaned from J. Jacob (ed.), *Record Book of the Scinde Irregular Horse*, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1856). On this earlier military culture more generally, see D. H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

113. One of the female survivors of the Aurangabad mutiny was Alexandra Orr (1828–1903), the wife of the Commandant of the Contingent's 3rd Cavalry, Sutherland George Gordon Orr and sister of the painter Frederic, Lord Leighton. Although her husband was killed, Alexandra escaped the uprising at the Aurangabad cantonment with the help of the loyal sepoy, Shaykh Bārān Bakhsh. She was later painted by Leighton in Oriental dress as the Moor's wife in his *Othello and Desdemona*. See 'Orr, Alexandra', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. On the earlier British search for 'Wahabi' rebels in Hyderabad and the events of 1857 in the city, see N. G. Chaudhuri, 'The Wahabi Conspiracy in Hyderabad (1838–1840)', *Indian Historical Congress Proceedings* 19 (1956) and N. G. Chaudhuri, 'The Rebellion in Hyderabad in 1857', *Indian Historical Congress Proceedings*, **20** (1957). On sepoy pay more generally, see Roy, *Brown Warriors*, pp.173–78.
114. *Afzal*, pp. 82–4.
115. The position of the bungalow vis-à-vis the barracks of the native cavalry who were in revolt is seen on *Cantonments of Secunderabad and Bolarum* [map], scale 1:5280 (Dehra Dun: Survey of India, 1901), sheet 6. On the earlier 'Bolarum dacoitee', in which bandits made off with some 14,500 rupees and 'silver horse-furniture valued at £15 more' from shops in the cantonment bazaar, see J. Hutton, *A Popular Account of the Thugs and Dacoits: The Hereditary Garotters and Gang-Robbers of India* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1857), p. 157.
116. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum in September 1855, for the Information of Brigadier Colin Mackenzie's Family and Private Friends. Drawn up, from Memoranda taken at the Time, by an Eye-Witness* (Edinburgh: Murray & Gibb, 1857). A slightly amended version with the same title was printed in Edinburgh in 1862 by Thomas Constable, but this too was not 'published' beyond private distribution. This version is also summarised in Bilgrami and Willmott, *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions*, vol. II, pp. 387–97.
117. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*, pp. 3–4. For a fuller account of the Deccan's Muharram performances from this period, see Jaffur Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam, or the Customs of the Mussulmans of India*, trans. G. A. Herklots (Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1991 [1863]), pp. 98–148. A more recent description and analysis of the processions is found in D. Pinault, *Horse of Karbala: Muslim Devotional Life in India* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001). On the Shiʿa ceremonial architecture of Hyderabad, see Sadiq Naqvi, *The ʿAshūr Khānas of Hyderabad City* (Hyderabad: Bab-ul-Ilm Society, 2006). On the link between Muharram and saintly shrines in Iraq, see Y. Nakash, 'The Muharram Rituals and the Cult of the Saints among Iraqi Shiʿites', in A. Monsutti, S. Naef and F. Sabahi (eds.), *The Other Shiʿites: From the Mediterranean to Central Asia* (Berne: Peter Lang, 2007).
118. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*, p. 4.
119. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*, pp. 4–5.
120. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*, p. 6.
121. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*, p. 6.

122. ‘Mackenzie, Colin’, in C. E. Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, 2 vols. (London: Sonnenschein, 1906) and ‘Mackenzie, Colin’, *ODNB*.
123. On the evangelical background of the earlier ‘mutiny’ of Muslim sepoys at Vellore in 1806, see R. Frykenberg, ‘New Light on the Vellore Mutiny’, in K. Ballhatchet and J. Harrison (eds.), *East India Company Studies: Papers Presented to Professor Sir Cyril Philips* (Hong Kong: Asian Research Services, 1986). For a spirited recent account of colonialism (mainly in Africa, the Americas and Australasia) and its suppression of the carnivalesque, see B. Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (London: Granta, 2007), Chapter 8, pp. 155–80.
124. Col. Edward Vibart, *The Sepoy Mutiny as Seen by a Subaltern, from Delhi to Lucknow* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1898), p. 38. It is to Vibart’s descendant Raleigh Trevelyan (b. 1923) that we owe the recording of the extraordinary story of T. E. Lawrence as a *faqīr* quoted in the Preface.
125. On the role of Islam in later acts of military indiscipline in India, see Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, pp. 129–34, 138–41. For recent reassessments of sepoy rebellions, see R. Mukherjee, ‘The Sepoy Mutinies Revisited’ and S. David, ‘Greased Cartridges and the Great Mutiny of 1857: A Pretext to Rebel or the Final Straw?’ in K. Roy (ed.), *War and Society in Colonial India, 1807–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
126. Revd W. B. Butler, *The Land of the Veda, being Personal Reminiscences of India* (New York: Philips & Hunt, 1871), p. 191.
127. Field-Marshal Earl Roberts of Kandahar, *Forty-One Years in India* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1908 [1897]), pp. 145–6.
128. Captain Hastings Fraser, *Our Faithful Ally, the Nizam: An Historical Sketch* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1865), p. 286.
129. Resident to the Secretary to the Government of India (23 July 1857), in ‘Hyderabad Residency – Civil Offices: Political Branch, File No. 2 of 1857’, Hyderabad Residency File P. 2/1857, Oriental and India Office Collections (R/2/79/155 [original manuscript version R/2/79/154]), p. 3. It is only fair to note that among the units praised for the ‘calmness’ and ‘control’ of the Residency’s defence was the 2nd Cavalry regiment of the Hyderabad Contingent.
130. Shams ul-Umara to Resident Davidson (21 July 1857), in Hyderabad Residency File P. 2/1857, p. 7. Shams al-Umarā was himself incidentally a descendant of the great North Indian Sufi Bābā Farīd al-dīn of Pakpattan (d. 664/1265), an ancestry that was well known to his contemporaries and the cause of much additional prestige.
131. Born in Burhanpur in the northern Deccan in 1191/1777, Shujāʿ al-dīn was early on associated with the Naqshbandī Sufi tradition that had first developed in Burhanpur as part of the southern expansion of the Mughal empire. Having studied at Burhanpur’s splendid Friday Mosque under Ghulām Muhyī al-dīn, Shujāʿ al-dīn then left his home town to complete the *hajj*. Returning from the Holy Land, at the age of twenty-five, he settled in Hyderabad with his wife and children, taking further initiations into the Naqshbandī, Chishtī, Qādirī and Rifāʿī *silsilas* under Mawlānā Rafīʿ al-dīn Qandaharī, who was based in the provincial Hyderabadi town of Nanded.

Shujāʿ al-dīn subsequently lived at the Friday mosque in Hyderabad, attracting fame as a scholar and completing at least a dozen works in Urdu, Persian and Arabic, as well as translating the Qurʿān into Urdu. Upon his death in 1265/1848, a mausoleum and mosque were constructed in his memory in the city's ʿĪdī Bāzār. On Shujāʿ al-dīn, see Ghulām Husayn Khān, *Tārīkh-e-Āsaf Jāhiyān*, pp. 410–15; Malkāpūrī, *Mahbūb-e-Zūʿl-minan*, pp. 1002–12; and Tulūʿ, *Tazkira-e-Awliyā-e-Haydarābād*, pp. 115–19. On the Sufis of Burhanpur, see Green, '*Auspicious Foundations*' and Bashīr Muhammad Khān, *Tārīkh-e-Awliyā-e-Karām-e-Burhānpūr* (Burhanpur: Hakīm al-dīn Khān, 1997).

132. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*.
133. On Whitlock in 1857, see G. B. Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny, 1857–1859* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1880), vol. III, pp. 136–8, 191–203. Unfortunately, the *Narrative* does not specify the regimental details of the '11th Native Cavalry', which I have been unable to clearly identify. It was not, however, part of the Hyderabad Contingent and may have been a confused recollection of the 11th Native Infantry of the Madras Army.
134. I am grateful to my anonymous reader for pointing out this strategy. Cf. Roy, *Brown Warriors*, pp. 59–61 on later Residents' distrust of Muslim sepoys.
135. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*.
136. Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*. For details of Mackenzie's recovery, and a defensive claim that he was never involved in 'interfering with their religion', 'preaching to the sawárs' or trampling on the Muslims' flags as many had claimed, see H. Mackenzie, *Storms and Sunshine of a Soldier's Life*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1884), vol. II, pp. 138 and 134 respectively. The account of the Bolarum episode found in this biography of Mackenzie repeats (largely verbatim) that found in the *Narrative*.
137. For a classic study of the sociology of the supernatural, see P. L. Berger, *A Rumour of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (London: Allen Lane, 1970).
138. On colonial evangelicalism and the 'politics of providence' after the First World War see G. Studdert-Kennedy, *Providence and the Raj: Imperial Mission and Missionary Imperialism* (London: Sage, 1998).
139. J. Page, *Henry Martyn: Pioneer Missionary to India and Islam* (Belfast: Ambassador, 2003 [1890]), pp. 37, 72, 107.
140. Page, *Henry Martyn*, p. 113.
141. Polehampton and Polehampton, *Memoir, Letters and Diary*, p. 233.
142. Quoted in C. Anderson, *The Indian Uprising of 1857–8: Prisons, Prisoners and Rebellion* (London: Anthem Press, 2007), pp. 4–5.
143. For an evangelical reading of the Vellore Mutiny, see Joshua Marshman (1768–1837), *Advantages of Christianity in Promoting the Establishment and Prosperity of the British Government in India: Containing Remarks Occasioned by Reading a Memoir on the Vellore Mutiny* (n.p. [London]: Smith's Printing-Office, 1813).
144. P. Carson, 'Missionaries, Bureaucrats and the People of India, 1793–1833', in N. Cassels (ed.), *Orientalism, Evangelicalism and the Military Cantonment in Early Nineteenth Century India: A Historiographical Overview*

(Lampeter: Edward Mellen Press, 1991), pp. 131, 139. In each of the Evangelical sermons referred to below it is argued that it was the banned absence of missionaries that caused the Rebellion rather than their presence, and, hence, it was only by allowing missionaries to preach openly to the sepoys that another such catastrophe could be avoided.

145. See the appraisal of his wife, Helen Mackenzie, *Storms and Sunshine of a Soldier's Life*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1884).
146. On the growth of the evangelicals' influence in India, see P. Carson, 'An Imperial Dilemma: The Propagation of Christianity in Early Colonial India', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, **18** (1990) and A. Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).
147. Revd J. R. Mitchell, *Indian Missions; Viewed in Connexion with the Mutiny and Other Recent Events* (London: James Nesbit & Co., 1859), p. 13.
148. Mitchell, *Indian Missions*, p. 9. The Indian in question was Babu Dukinarjanun Mukerjeem, speaking to the Native British Indian Association in Calcutta in July 1857.
149. Mitchell, *Indian Missions*, p. 7.
150. The diary was later published several times, first as *Life in the Mission, the Camp and the Zenáná; or, Six Years in India*, 3 vols. (London, 1853). However, in the following account I have used Mrs Colin Mackenzie, *Six Years in India; Delhi: The City of the Great Mogul, with an Account of the Various Tribes in Hindostan; Hindus, Sikhs, Affghans, etc* (London: Richard Bentley, 1857).
151. On the development of the latter strategy, see P. Williams, 'The Missing Link: The Recruitment of Women Missionaries in Some English Evangelical Missionary Societies in the Nineteenth Century', in D. Kirkwood, F. Bowie and S. Ardenev (eds.), *Women and Missions: Past and Present Anthropological and Historical Perceptions* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1993).
152. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 56.
153. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 234.
154. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 61.
155. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 100.
156. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, pp. 73–5.
157. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 59.
158. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 234. Cf. the story on p. 272 of the 'ill treatment' of an earlier officer for 'allowing' his sepoys to attend his family's Christian worship.
159. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 115.
160. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, pp. 118, 115. For a collective characterisation of the 'molevis', see p. 135.
161. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 102.
162. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 102. On another occasion, Mackenzie listened with satisfaction when the adopted son of a native army officer in Poona described how he had previously been led astray and into sin by a *faqīr* called Gharīb Shāh but had since then accepted the Christian faith. See Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, pp. 219–20.

163. The letter is printed in Col. H. Fraser, *Memoir and Correspondence of General James Stuart Fraser of the Madras Army* (London: Whiting & Co., 1885), p. 143. On the 1806 Vellore Mutiny, see Frykenberg, 'New Light on the Vellore Mutiny'.
164. Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, pp. 79–80 and Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*.
165. W. J. Wilson, *History of the Madras Army* (Madras: Government Press, 1882), vol. II, p. 132.
166. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 99.
167. On these and other such figures, see Muhammad Sadīq Qurēshī, *Jang-e-āzādī kē muslim mashāhīr* (Lahore: Maqbūl Akadimī, 1986), especially pp. 137–43.
168. N. S. Green, *Indian Sufism since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books and Empires in the Muslim Deccan* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 105 and R. Jayaram, *Administrative System under the Nizams, 1853–1935* (Bangalore: Ultra Publications, 1998), pp. 130–5.
169. Revd N. J. Moody, *India's Past and Future and England's Duty, a Sermon* (Oxford: H. Hammans, 1857), p. 18.
170. See e.g., Revd W. R. Morrison, *Facts for a Christian Public: An Earnest Appeal to the People of England concerning our Future Conduct in India* (London: Wertheim, MacIntosh & Hunt, 1859), pp. 23–6.
171. Anonymous, *The Sepoy Rebellion* (London: n.p., 1857; reprinted from the *London Quarterly Review*, **17** [1857]), p. 60.
172. Lieut.-Corpl. V. J. Ryder, *Two Years in Malabar, Being a Description of the Military Station and Cantonment of Malappuram, South Malabar; An Account of the Moplah Caste, and their Superstitions; the History and Origin of the Great Moplah Feast of the 'Nurcha,' etc* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1907).
173. An interesting example of such works was written by Revd John David Macbride (1778–1868), Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic at Oxford, expert on the Christian scriptures, and affiliate of the Church Missionary Service, to one of whose missionaries he dedicated the primer on Islam he completed in the wake of the Mutiny of 1857. See J. D. Macbride, *The Mohammedan Religion Explained, with an Introductory Sketch of its Progress, and Suggestions for its Confutation* (London: Seeley, Jackson & Halliday, 1857). On British missionary encounters with India's Muslims during this period, see A. A. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1993).
174. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. v.
175. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*, p. 6.
176. Charlotte Florentina Clive, 'Journal of a Voyage to the East Indies and During a Residence There a Tour Through the Mysore and Tanjore Countries, etc. and the Return Voyage to England', British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Ms. WD4235, pp. 179–81, cited in F. J. Korom, *Hosay Trinidad: Muharram Performances in an Indo-Caribbean Diaspora* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 83–4. The *tabouts* and *pimjas* mentioned in the text refer to the

symbolic coffins (*tābūt*, which in practice resembled buildings) and the five-fingered standards *(panja)* symbolising the five key members of the Prophet's family.

177. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 115.
178. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, pp. 115–16.
179. Mackenzie was probably referring to the army political agent Peter Nicolson, on whose role of the war in question see M. E. Yapp, 'Disturbances in Western Afghanistan, 1839–41', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 26, 2 (1963).
180. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 116.
181. Major Herbert B. Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier, in 1848–9*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), vol. I, p. 315. On Edwardes' religious enthusiasms, see Herbert Benjamin Edwardes and John Ruskin, *A Knight's Faith: Passages in the Life of Sir Herbert Edwardes* (London: George Allen, 1885).
182. Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, vol. I, p. 72.
183. W. H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, ed. Vincent A. Smith (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), pp. 521–2.
184. See H. Mackenzie, *Storms and Sunshine of a Soldier's Life*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1884), vol. II, p. 115.
185. Mackenzie, *Storms and Sunshine of a Soldier's Life*, vol. II, p. 115.
186. Sita Ram Pandey, *From Sepoy to Subedar*, p. 16. Nonetheless, in the diary of his journey from the Secunderabad cantonment to London in 1893, the Indian Muslim soldier ʿAbd al-Razzāq left a charming account of the mixed male and female dancing he and his fellow soldiers witnessed in England. Among the many such soldierly entertainments he describes were 'five Arabians in which two were young maids, they first performed the gymnastic works very skilfully, and then one of the maids waved a loaded rifle so skilfully as the Indian Pahlwans (wrestlers) do with a sword, and the rifle was discharged when waving'. See ʿAbd al-Razzāk [sic], Jamaʿdār, *The Native Officer's Diary: The Diary kept by Abdur Razzak […] on his Tour of Duty to […] the Empress of India in the Imperial Institute at London* (Madras: Higginbotham & Co., 1894), pp. 25–6.
187. For a spirited, entertaining and informative account of the *mawlid* festivals of Egypt by the colonial administrator and anthropologist Joseph McPherson (1866–1946) which draws attention to their bacchanalian character, see J. W. McPherson, *The Moulids of Egypt: Egyptian Saints-Days* (Cairo: Ptd. N. M. Press, 1941). McPherson was certainly well informed, though, as the notice on him in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* puts it, 'Anthropological curiosity […] was not always the main motive for his visits to Cairo's seedier clubs and brothels, but he was familiar enough with their dangers to carry a pair of knuckledusters or a gun.'
188. On this theme, see N. S. Green and M. Searle-Chatterjee, 'Religion, Language and Power: An Introductory Essay', in N. S. Green and M. Searle-Chatterjee (eds.), *Religion, Language and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
189. One is all too tempted to allude to that more recent anthem of the carnival-esque, the Beastie Boys' 'Fight for the Right to Party'. But on the festivals of

the East better to quote Byron, who, like other nineteenth-century travellers, had more than a little experience of the bacchanals of Islam:

> Here was no lack of innocent diversion
> For the imagination or the senses,
> Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian,
> All pretty pastimes in which no offence is.
>
> (*Don Juan*, canto III, 35, 1–4)

190. Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, pp. 112–48.
191. Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, p. 135.
192. Shurreef, *Qanoon-e-Islam*, p. 137. I have rendered these terms into more standard transliteration.
193. Mrs Mir Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussulmauns of India, Descriptive of their Manners, Customs, Habits and Religious Opinions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), p. 375. For a more recent study of the Makanpur shrine and its rituals, see U. Falasch, 'The Islamic Mystic Tradition in India: The Madari Sufi Brotherhood', in I. Ahmad and H. Reifeld (eds.), *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict* (Delhi: Social Science Press, 2004).
194. Sake Dean Mahomet, *The Travels of Dean Mahomet*, p. 52.
195. G. O. Trevelyan, *Cawnpore* (London: Macmillan, 1865), p. 30, cited in P. Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 203.
196. The text of the play was originally published in 1858 in New York by Samuel French and by T. H. Lacy in London as Lacy's Acting Edition, vol. V, No. 10. It is reprinted in Dion Boucicault, *Plays*, ed. P. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). The text of the news report that inspired Boucicault is included as an appendix to this volume. On other British literary reactions to 1857, see P. Brantlinger, 'The Well at Cawnpore: Literary Representations of the Indian Mutiny of 1857', in Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*.
197. The song and music were repeatedly published all round the empire. See e.g., Grace Campbell and John Blockley, *Jessie's Dream: A Story of the Relief of Lucknow* (Melbourne: Clarson, Shallard & Co., 1860).
198. Rich, *The Mutiny in Sialkot*, pp. 19–20, with misprint amended. Revd Thomas Hunter was a missionary of the Church of Scotland; his wife was Jane Scott; his son also Thomas.
199. Rich, *The Mutiny in Sialkot*, p. 25.
200. Many other Mutiny memoirs contain such stories. See, for example, Chapter 63 'Anglo-Indian Ghosts', in J. Douglas, *Bombay and Western India; A Series of Stray Papers*, 2 vols. (London: S. Low, Marston & Company, 1893), vol. II. See especially p. 366 for the ghostly appearance of a general in uniform before his daughter in Edinburgh before 'the next news from India brought tidings of the Mutiny, and that the lady's father had gone out in full uniform to address his native troops and had been shot down by them.'
201. Rich, *The Mutiny in Sialkot*, p. 78.

202. As Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj* (p. 106) has noted, 'Although the bond between British officers and Indian other ranks was not as intense as the Imperialists liked to believe, it had many of the ingredients of a stable marriage. Both parties accepted that they could never fully understand each other, but each had their own carefully marked space and well-defined duties, and their mainly peaceful coexistence was warmed by familiarity and reinforced by habit.'
203. Cf. L. Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-De-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, Md.: Duke University Press, 2006).
204. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum*, *infra* and especially pp. 48–50.
205. *Afzal*, pp. 115–16.
206. Cited in Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, p. 92. On the reflection of these military practices in wider colonial attempts to educate Indian Muslims according to logocentric British norms, see S. Seth, 'Governmentality, Pedagogy, Identity: The Problem of the "Backward Muslim" in Colonial India', in C. Bates (ed.), *Beyond Representation: Colonial and Postcolonial Constructions of Indian Identity* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).
207. Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, p. 92, who has gone so far as to state that '[t]heir duties were to act as figures of control over the sipahi.'
208. Mackenzie, *Six Years in India*, p. 148.
209. Morrison, *Facts for a Christian Public*, p. 34.
210. On Anglo-Indian uses of the term, see 'Padre', in Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*.
211. C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
212. Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, p. 92.
213. I am grateful to Toby Parker, archivist of Haileybury, for showing me these examination papers.

3 ALLAH'S NAKED REBELS

1. On earlier antinomian *faqīrs*, see S. Digby, 'Qalandars and Social Disturbance during the Delhi Sultanate', in Y. Friedmann (ed.), *Islam in Asia*, vol. I, *South Asia* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1984); K. P. Ewing, 'Malangs of the Punjab: Intoxication or Adab as the Path to God', in B. D. Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984); and A. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1994).
2. A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950), p. 119.
3. For an example of this, see H. Balfour, 'Life History of an Aghori Fakir; with Exhibition of the Human Skull Used by Him as a Drinking Vessel, and Notes on the Similar Use of Skulls by Other Races', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, **26** (1897).

4. *Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series: Hyderabad State* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1909), p. 70; henceforth *Hyderabad Gazetteer*.
5. On the colonial army and the Indian soldier in Punjab, see T. Y. Tan, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849–1947* (London: Sage, 2005). By the turn of the twentieth century, half of Indian Army recruits were being drawn from Punjab.
6. Muhammad Ismāʿīl Shāh Qādirī, *Aʿzam al-Karāmāt* (Aurangabad: Muʿīn Press, n.d. (*c*. 1340/1921)), p. 11; henceforth *AK*. The *farmān* is referred to in a later legal document (Banē Miyān Collection, document B). It is unclear to precisely what this *farmān-e-khusrawī* refers. The most likely possibility is the *Tamga-e-Khusraw-e-Dakan*, a medal awarded for acts of public service in gold, silver and bronze categories. However, since such medals only existed in Hyderabad during the early twentieth century, being slow to adopt European-style decorations, it is also possible that the award was a twentieth-century invention of Banē Miyān's biographer and, hence, a medal awarded only hagiographically.
7. *AK*, p. 11. For colonial racial characterisations of the Punjabi Mussulman or 'PM' soldier, see E. Candler, *The Sepoy* (London: John Murray, 1919), pp. 49–62.
8. Sir Richard Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim, and Nepal*, 2 vols. (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1887), vol. I, p. 144.
9. Muʿīn al-dīn was born in 1323/1905 and, as the last surviving link with Banē Miyān, was still alive in 1999/2000 and 2003, when I conducted a series of informal interviews with him and his wider family.
10. Interviews with Muʿīn al-dīn Khan and Sayyid Quddus, shrine of Banē Miyān, Aurangabad, December 1999 to January 2000 and August 2003.
11. *The Quarterly Army List for April 1, 1894* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1894), p. 452.
12. 'Jamedar' and 'Ressaidar' signified a native subaltern officer and a native commanding officer of a troop of irregular horse respectively. The assignment of the latter rank to Banē Miyān's father would fit well with what we have seen in the Introduction of the organisation of Hyderabad's armed forces prior to the changes of the mid-1850s.
13. Bābā Jān is discussed in detail below.
14. *AK*, p. 11.
15. *AK*, p. 77. This childhood meeting and naming narrative is also repeated in the oral tradition of Banē Miyān's family at his shrine in Aurangabad.
16. On Habīb ʿAlī Shāh, see Muhammad Muhyī al-dīn Habībī Hāfiz, *Zikr-e-habīb* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.); translated as Naeem Khan Chishti, *Life History of Khwaja Habib Ali Shah* (Durban: Soofie Saheb Badsha Peer Darbar, 1424/2004) and Hājjī Muhammad Maqbūl, *Manāqib al-habībīn* (Delhi: Jahna Litho-Press, n.d. [*c*. 1906]).
17. C. W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 237.
18. G. Orwell, 'Shooting an Elephant', in G. Orwell, *Inside the Whale and Other Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 96.

19. *AK*, pp. 15–16.
20. This presentation of Banē Miyān as a divine child may have drawn on the same currents of South Indian tradition that elsewhere saw the Prophet Muhammad praised as a moon gazing at baby in the crib, itself an echo of the older history of Krishna worship in the south.
21. R. Brunel, *Le Monachisme errant dans l'Islam* (Paris: Librairie Larose, 1955), pp. 26 and 45.
22. For a study of the *Asrār al-majzūbīn*, relating to the medieval North Indian Sufi ecstatic Khwāja Gurg, see S. Digby, 'Anecdotes of a Provincial Sufi of the Delhi Sultanate, Khwāja Gurg of Kara', *Iran*, **32** (1998).
23. On these processes among the earlier Muslim saints of Aurangabad, see Green, *Indian Sufism since the Seventeenth Century*.
24. This text and its contents are discussed and printed by ʿAbd al-Qādir Sarwārī in his Urdu introduction to the complete works of Sirāj. See Sirāj Awrangābādī, *Kulliyat-e-Sirāj*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir Sarwārī (repr. Delhi: Qawmī Kawnsil barāye Furūgh-e-Urdū Zabān, 1998), pp. 17–81.
25. Mahmūd Awrangābādī, *Malfūzāt-e-Naqshbandiyya: Hālāt-e-Hazrat Bābā Shāh Musāfir Sāhib* (Haydarabad: Nizāmat-e-ʿUmūr-e-Mazhabī-e-Sarkār-e-ʿĀlī, 1358/1939), translated by S. Digby, *Sufis and Soldiers in Aurangzeb's Deccan* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).
26. Banē Miyān Collection, document D.
27. Zahūr Khān Zahūr, *Nūr al-anwār* (being an Urdu translation of the parts of *Bahār ū Khizān* of Bāhāʾ al-dīn Hasan ʿUrūj related to Shāh Nūr, with a foreword by the translator), Ms., Collection of Mohammad Abd al-Hayy, Awrangabad, p. 1.
28. J. P. Butlin, 'Muhammadan Work in Aurangabad', *Bombay Muhammadan Mission News* (29 November 1902) and K. Leonard, 'Hyderabad: The Mulki-Non-Mulki Conflict', in R. Jeffrey (ed.), *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 70.
29. Anonymous, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, 2 vols. (Hyderabad: Hyderabad State Committee, 1956).
30. On the emergence of a Dalit literature shortly to the west in the towns of the Bombay Presidency during the same period, see P. Constable, 'Early Dalit Literature and Culture in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Western India', *Modern Asian Studies*, **31**, 2 (1997).
31. On such anecdotes, see C. Oesterheld, 'Entertainment and Reform: Urdu Narrative Genres in the Nineteenth Century', in S. Blackburn and V. Dalmia (eds.), *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004).
32. *AK*, pp. 23–5. On the foundation of the police force in Hyderabad State, see Jayaram, *Administrative System under the Nizams*, pp. 130–5.
33. *AK*, pp. 26 and 72–3.
34. *AK*, pp. 65–6.
35. *AK*, p. 70.
36. Ross's handwritten memoirs are preserved in the India Office in London (OIOC, Mss. Eur. B235). While a description of the contents of the memoirs

makes reference to Ross's visits to Aurangabad, Vols. II and III (dealing with the years 1901–18 during which Ross was in Ahmadnagar) have been lost. It is therefore impossible to say whether Ross – who occasionally mentions local religious practices in his extant diaries – ever noticed Banē Miyān during his visits to the Aurangabad cantonment.

37. *AK*, pp. 25–6.
38. *AK*, pp. 45–6, 55, 66–7.
39. Revd Henry Lane-Smith, CMS Collection, Unofficial Papers, Acc. 33, Special Collections Department, University of Birmingham. On Smith and his Muslim rivals, see N. S. Green, 'Mystical Missionaries in Hyderabad State: Muʾīn Allāh Shāh and his Sufi Reform Movement', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, **41**, 2 (2005).
40. S. Digby, 'Qalandars and Related Groups: Elements of Social Deviance in the Religious Life of the Delhi Sultanate of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in Y. Friedmann (ed.), *Islam in India*, vol. I (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984).
41. *AK*, p. 11.
42. Candler, *The Sepoy*, p. 54.
43. Appendix IV (p. 347), 'Robberies in Marathwada: 1879–1935', in R. Jayaram, *Administrative System under the Nizams, 1853–1935* (Bangalore: Ultra Publications, 1998).
44. *AK*, p. 13.
45. Figures cited O. Qureshi, 'Healthcare in Hyderabad, 1846–1943 AD' (unpublished B.Sc. dissertation, University of London, 2003), p. 39; for details of the plague in Hyderabad see pp. 33–42.
46. *CMS, Aurangabad, India*, printed leaflet dated 1 January 1917 in Lane-Smith (1901–38), Z2.
47. On this topic, see I. J. Catanach, 'Plague and the Tensions of Empire: India, 1896–1918', in D. Arnold (ed.), *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) and R. Chandavarkar, 'Plague, Panic and Epidemic Politics in India, 1896–1914', in T. Ranger and P. Slack (eds.), *Epidemics and Ideas: Essays on the Historical Perception of Pestilence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
48. Oriental and India Office Collections, Mss. Eur. B235, vol. I, pp. 85–99.
49. M. Hatcher, *The Undauntables; being Thrilling Stories of Salvation Army Pioneering Days in India* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1933), pp. 185–91.
50. On the latter, see Qureshi, 'Healthcare in Hyderabad', pp. 34–5.
51. *AK*, pp. 69–70.
52. J. Page, *Henry Martyn: Pioneer Missionary to India and Islam* (Belfast: Ambassador, 2003 [1890]), p. 96. To Martyn, the *kōtwāl* was nothing but a brigand, though with his old formal title (denoting a magistrate or 'chief of police'), it is possible that he was a rebellious relic of the pre-colonial order, seizing the chaplain's servant on the grounds of collaboration with the new regime.
53. J. G. Katz, 'The 1907 Mauchamp Affair and the French Civilising Mission in Morocco', in J. Clancy-Smith (ed.), *North Africa, Islam and the Mediterranean World* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

54. *AK*, pp. 25–6.
55. S. Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770–1830* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 143–54. On early nineteenth-century native asylums in the Bengal and Madras presidencies, see W. Ernst, 'The Establishment of "Native Lunatic Asylums" in Early Nineteenth Century British India', in G. J. Meulenbeld and D. Wujastyk (eds.), *Studies in Indian Medical History* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1987) and W. Ernst, 'Colonial Lunacy Policies and the Madras Lunatic Asylum in the Early Nineteenth Century', in B. Pati and M. Harrison (eds.), *Health, Medicine and Empire: Perspectives on Colonial India* (Hyderabad: Longman Orient, 2001).
56. J. H. Mills, *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism: The 'Native-Only' Lunatic Asylums of British India, 1857–1900* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 12. I am indebted to this work for providing initial leads into the hospital archive documentation explored below.
57. Mills, *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism*, pp. 103–28. On colonial medicine in India generally and in Hyderabad respectively, see D. Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993); A. ur-Rehman, 'Growth of the Hospital System in Hyderabad: Historical and Demographic Aspects, 1880's–1950's', *Bulletin of the Indian Institute of History of Medicine*, **20**, 2 (1990) and Qureshi, 'Healthcare in Hyderabad'. Data on the earlier role of the Indian Army in the expansion of European medicine in India through the neighbouring cantonments of the Bombay Presidency is found in the files catalogued as 'Reports on Space Needed for Each Soldier in Barracks, with Statistics of Numbers of Soldiers in Each Barracks in the Bombay Presidency, 1853, Notes on the Sanatorium of Mahableshwur [Sic], and Reports and Plans of Barracks and Hospitals in the Bombay Presidency, Mainly Those in Hyderabad and Poona' (1851–4), Wellcome Collection, London, file RAMC/397/E/RR/1. (The Hyderabad discussed in the documents, however, is that in Sind.)
58. On madness in medieval and modern Islam, see I. Al-Issa (ed.), *Al-Junūn: Mental Illness in the Islamic World* (Madison, Wisc.: International Universities Press, 2000) and M. W. Dols, *Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Dols's approach, largely eschewing Foucault to implicitly maintain a trans-historical model of pathological insanity rather than a social-constructivist model has been criticised in B. Shoshan, 'The State and Madness in Medieval Islam', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, **35** (2003). For foundational studies in the history of European madness, see M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971) and R. Porter, *A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989). Porter's work substantially revised Foucault's picture of an early modern 'great confinement', pointing to the much greater expansion of asylums in the nineteenth century, a picture that was clearly reflected in colonial India.
59. On competition between colonial and Indo-Islamic medicine during this period, see J. C. Hume, 'Rival Traditions: Western Medicine and Yunani

Tibb in the Punjab, 1849–89', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, **51** (1977) and S. A. Husain, 'Unani Physicians in Hyderabad State during Nizam IV, V and VI', *Bulletin of the Indian Institute of History of Medicine*, **13**, 1–4 (1983).

60. See Dols, *Majnūn*, and S. Kakar, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors: A Psychological Inquiry into India and its Healing Traditions* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), especially pp. 15–52 on the association between madness, possession and Sufi shrines.
61. *AK*, pp. 9–10. In places such antinomianism as a path to status survived. Writing in the early 1970s, the Indian anthropologist Khwaja Hasan recounted the following story from the North Indian village where he carried out fieldwork. 'A man belonging to a sweeper caste (untouchable) worked as an employee of the Railways in the city. His duties included cleaning toilets in the railroad cars and at the Railway Station in the city. He learnt the use of *gānjā*, *bhāng*, and *charas* under the influence of some holy man. Later he left his well-paid job and became a *Bhagat;* he returned to the village and indulged excessively in smoking *gānjā*. Even members of the higher rank Shudra castes like Pasi, Chamar, and Bhujwa joined his smoking parties […] Leaving a well-paid job did not lower his prestige; in fact, this enhanced his status for this meant renunciation of the material world.' Hasan interpreted the story as demonstrating how 'members of lower castes or even untouchables can get higher individual status by becoming *bhagats* and by using hemp drugs'. See K. A. Hasan, 'Social Aspects of the Use of Cannabis in India', in V. Rubin (ed.), *Cannabis and Culture* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), p. 243.
62. On the earlier development of the asylum for Europeans in India, see W. Ernst, *Mad Tales from the Raj: The European Insane in British India, 1800–1858* (London: Routledge, 1991). For the fascinating autiobiographical account of an Englishman falsely accused of insanity and incarcerated for two years by 'Scotch doctors', see Henry Justinian Newcome, *The Lunatic; or English Clergymen and Scotch Doctors, An Autobiography* (London: John Pownceby, 1861).
63. The village and the 'madhouse' at al-Khizr are briefly described in A. Augustinović, *'El-Khadr' and the Prophet Elijah* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1972), p. 24, note 30.
64. *Hyderabad Gazetteer*, pp. 79–80.
65. See J. S. Howard, MD, *Report on the Amraoti Lunatic Asylum in the Hyderabad Assigned Districts for 1878* (Hyderabad: Residency Government Press, 1879) and G. E. King, *Report on the Amraoti Lunatic Asylum in the Hyderabad Assigned Districts for 1879* (Hyderabad: Residency Government Press, 1880).
66. Proceedings of the Resident at Hyderabad, No. 1047, dated Hyderabad Residency, 24 April 1884. (Printed in *Report on the Amraoti Lunatic Asylum in the Hyderabad Assigned Districts for 1883* (Hyderabad: Residency Government Press, 1884), p. 7).
67. As a consequence, despite the fact that there were over 83,000 residents in 1901, Secunderabad was covered in less than a page and a half in the *Hyderabad Gazetteer* (pp. 119–20).
68. See *Cantonments of Secunderabad and Bolarum* (map), scale 1:5,280 (Dehra Dun: Survey of India, 1901), sheet 3.

69. *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1892* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1893), p. 2 and *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1893* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1894), p. 2.
70. See e.g., *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1881* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1882), p. 12. In occasional annual reports (such as that for 1890, p. 12) the term 'fakir' was deleted, only to reappear in the tables of subsequent reports.
71. *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1881*, p. 12.
72. *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1895* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1896), p. 14.
73. *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1895*, p. 14.
74. On attempts to pass such vacancy legislation, see W. R. Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 238–9.
75. On the contrasting social and religious meanings of poverty in medieval Egypt, see A. Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
76. Captain Henry Hudson Ozzard, *The Cantonment Magistrate's Manual* (Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press, 1890).
77. Ozzard, *The Cantonment Magistrate's Manual*.
78. Ozzard, *The Cantonment Magistrate's Manual*, pp. 50–1, 67–79, 90–1.
79. Ozzard, *The Cantonment Magistrate's Manual*, pp. 20–2.
80. Ozzard, *The Cantonment Magistrate's Manual*, p. 51. Also, K. Roy, *Brown Warriors of the Raj* (Delhi, Manohar, 2008), pp. 253–58.
81. Ozzard, *The Cantonment Magistrate's Manual*, p. 51.
82. Ozzard, *The Cantonment Magistrate's Manual*, pp. 7, 11.
83. A. Arnold, *Through Persia by Caravan* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1877), vol. I, pp. 265, 271 and 282–3 and vol. II, pp. 123–4.
84. Sir David Prain, *Report on the Cultivation and Use of Gánjá* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1893), p. 70.
85. An interesting echo of these attitudes is found in R. C. Zaehner, *Mysticism Sacred and Profane: An Inquiry into some Varieties of Praeternatural Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961). In his conclusions, Zaehner, the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University, voiced an aloof reiteration of the bourgeois attitudes towards drug-induced ecstasy we have seen in colonial India: such induced experiences are morally neutral and so incapable of doing any good. Zaehner quoted with approval the 'idle man [who] has contrived to introduce the supernatural into his life and thought artificially' from the Baudelaire of *Les Paradis artificiels* (p. 104). The book is also notable for its unintentionally entertaining account of Zaehner's own experiment with mescaline in his rooms at All Souls in 1955, during which the celebrated professor gazed in wonder at his wine glass, cigarette box and favourite Persian rug ('a Feraghan of extraordinarily rich design with a basic colouring of deep, glowing russets'), while listening to the *Te Deum* of Berlioz. The contrast of this urbane setting with the shabby scenes of Banē Miyān's 'degenerate' reveries a few decades earlier is both amusing and provocative.

86. *Hyderabad Gazetteer*, p. 80.
87. On Hyderabad's police force, see *Hyderabad Gazetteer*, pp. 70–3 and R. Jayaram, *Administrative System under the Nizams, 1853–1935* (Bangalore: Ultra Publications, 1998), pp. 130–5.
88. *Hyderabad Gazetteer*, p. 202.
89. On the role of the Indian soldier as representative of the Raj, see B. S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in B. S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).
90. Maneksha Dinsha, *The Law of Extradition between H. H. the Nizam's Dominions and British India* (Madras: Lawrence Asylum Press, 1898). Incidentally, the first Extradition Treaty was signed in May 1867, followed by the Extradition Act No. xxi of 1879, which was in turn replaced by the 1898 law.
91. 'Chapter XII: Rules Regarding the Trial of Offences by or against Sepoys of the Hyderabad Contingent', in Dinsha, *The Law of Extradition*, pp. 52–4.
92. Dinsha, *The Law of Extradition*, p. 53.
93. On Jalna, see *Hyderabad Gazetteer*, pp. 212–13.
94. *AK*, pp. 28–9.
95. A generation later, the North Indian *faqīr* Qurbī (d. 1966) was similarly wont to throw stones at his supplicants when in a state of frenzy. See J. W. Frembgen, 'Divine Madness and Cultural Otherness: *Dīwānas* and *Faqīrs* in Northern Pakistan', *South Asia Research*, **26**, 3 (2006), p. 237.
96. H. G. Gelber, *Opium, Soldiers and Evangelicals: Britain's 1840–42 War with China, and its Aftermath* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 203–17.
97. Mills, *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism*, pp. 43–65.
98. T. S. Clouston, 'The Cairo Asylum: Dr Warnock on Hashish Insanity', *Journal of Mental Science*, **42**, 179 (October 1896). Clouston reported that in 1895, 41 per cent of the Cairo asylum's inmates were confined through cannabis abuse.
99. *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1873–4* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1874), p. 44.
100. *Annual Administration […] for the Year 1873–4*, pp. 26, 44.
101. *Charas* and *gānjā* were respectively resin and leaves of cannabis for smoking (at this time still generally inhaled through the straight clay pipe or *chillam*, albeit with tobacco), while *bhāng* consisted of leaves of cannabis prepared for drinking. Urdu drugs terminology varies considerably by period and place and has become complicated by the adoption of Urdu (and cognate Arabo-Persian) loan words into English. *Hashīsh* (originally an Arabic slang term with the appropriate connotation of 'weed') thus designated a drink made from cannabis leaves rather than the resin which the term has come to designate in modern English usage. The best aid for clarifying official colonial use of this terminology is 'cannabis sativa', in Kanny Lal Dey (assisted by W. Mair), *The Indigenous Drugs of India*, 2nd edn (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1896).

102. *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1891* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1892), pp. 14–15. On the role of law, public morals and the state in shaping the social culture of cannabis users, see also J. Young, 'The Role of the Police as Amplifiers of Deviancy, Negotiators of Reality and Translators of Fantasy', in S. Cohen (ed.), *Images of Deviance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).
103. *Annual Administration and Progress Report on the Insane Asylums in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1891*.
104. Anonymous, *Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolarum in September 1855, for the Information of Brigadier Colin Mackenzie's Family and Private Friends, Drawn up, from Memoranda taken at the Time, by an Eye-Witness* (Edinburgh: Murray & Gibb, 1857), p. 4.
105. See Surgeon-General James Fairweather, 'Through the Mutiny with the 4th Punjab Infantry, Punjab Irregular Force', unpublished typescript, p. 153, in Fairweather Papers, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge.
106. Sita Ram Pandey, *From Sepoy to Subedar: Being the Life and Adventures of a Native Officer of the Bengal Army Written and Related by Himself*, trans. and ed. J. T. Norgate and D. C. Phillott (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1911), pp. 24–5.
107. Anonymous, 'On the Effects and the Use and Abuse of Bazaar Preparations of Indian Hemp', *Madras Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, **7** (1873) and J. Lawrence, 'On the Prevalence of, and Ill Effects Resulting from, the Use of Chang and Other Narcotic Drugs in the Native Army', *Madras Quarterly Medical Journal*, **6** (1884). Such scientific writings were also echoed in fictional representations of the coalescence of drug-use and religious fanaticism that played an important part in colonial conceptions of the 'irrational' precepts of Indian opposition to British rule. A good example is found in Kipling's story *The Drums of the Fore and Aft* (first published in 1889), in which a troop of loyal sepoys is attacked by a fifty-strong gang of 'Ghazis [i.e. Muslim 'holy warriors'], half maddened with drugs and wholly mad with religious fanaticism.' See Rudyard Kipling, *War Stories and Poems*, ed. A. Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 29.
108. 'Opium has been spoken of as the emergency ration of the Persian soldier, but the drug is now forbidden in the Persian army, and any officer using it does so surreptitiously, and is in danger of immediate discharge if found to be addicted to it.' See G. Everard Dodson, M.D., 'The Opium Habit in Persia', *The Moslem World*, **17**, 3 (1927), p. 263. On the reform of the Persian Army, see S. Cronin, 'Reza Šah and the Paradoxes of Military Modernization in Iran' and A. Karvar, 'La Réforme de l'état et la modernisation de l'armée persane au 19e siècle: un processus inachevé', *Quaderni di Oriente Moderno*, **23**, 5 (2004).
109. For a mid-nineteenth-century response to sepoy barracks culture from one of the most prolific commentators on the Army and religion, see J. Jacob, *Tracts on the Native Army of India, its Organization and Discipline* (Cornfield: Smith, Elder & Co., 1857).
110. Banē Miyān Collection, shrine of Banē Miyān, Aurangabad, document A (copy in author's possession).

111. On the status of *waqf* properties in British India, see G. C. Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
112. On similar procedures in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, see J. Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Popular Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800–1904)* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994) and V. Hoffman, *Sufism, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).
113. On different aspects of this theme in earlier Sufi tradition, see J. C. Bürgel, 'Ecstasy and Order: Two Structural Principles in the *Ghazal* Poetry of Jalal al-din Rumi', in L. Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. II, *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150–1500)* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999) and C. W. Ernst, *The Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985).
114. Banē Miyān Collection, document D. Copy in author's possession.
115. Banē Miyān Collection, document D.
116. This information is based on interviews with members of Banē Miyān's family at his shrine in Aurangabad during August 2003. I am grateful to Muʿin al-dīn Khan, Kashifuddin Khān and Sayyid Quddus for their cooperation and hospitality.
117. On recent communal tensions over shrine architecture and the religious identity of cult figures in India, see Y. S. Sikand, 'Another Ayodhya in the Making? The Baba Budhangiri Dargah Controversy in South India', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, **20**, 2 (2000).
118. Mazhar Husain (Director of Statistics, Hyderabad Central Govt), *List of Uruses, Melas, Jatras, etc. in H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, 1349 F. (1940 A.D.)* (Hyderabad: Government Central Press, 1940).
119. On Tāj al-dīn's life, see Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā: mukāmil sawānih ʿumrī* (Nagpur: n.p., n.d.) and Ekkirala Bharadwaja, *Shri Tajuddin Baba* (Ongole: Sri Gurupaduka Publications, n.d.). A short early account of his life also appears in Purdom, *The Perfect Master*, p. 25. I am extremely grateful to James R. Newell for providing me with a copy of *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*.
120. On the Madras Army, see C. Montgomery, 'The Sepoy Army and Colonial Madras, *c.* 1806–57', unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2003.
121. W. W. Hunter, J. S. Cotton, R. Burn and W. S. Meyer (eds.), *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908–31), vol. XIV, pp. 329–30.
122. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 10–12.
123. Unfortunately, the sources on Tāj al-dīn's life offer no more specific data on his regimental affiliation.
124. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 12–13; Bharadwaja, *Shri Tajuddin Baba*, pp. 4–5. I have been unable to firmly identify this figure from army records.
125. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, p. 17, Bharadwaja, *Shri Tajuddin Baba*, p. 8. The story was clearly well known and was also reported

in the 1930s by Purdom, *The Perfect Master*. Such exhibitionism was far from unique: in the 1960s a North Indian *faqīr* called Sangula regularly 'wrapped up his penis with gold foil paper (used for packing tea) […] proudly presenting it to the public'. See Frembgen, 'Divine Madness and Cultural Otherness', p. 239.

126. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 18–19 and Bharadwaja, *Shri Tajuddin Baba*, p. 8.
127. C. Anderson, *The Indian Uprising of 1857–8: Prisons, Prisoners and Rebellion* (London: Anthem Press, 2007).
128. *Report on the Lunatic Asylums in the Central Provinces for the Year 1892* (Nagpur: Chief Secretariat Press, 1893), pp. 1–2.
129. *Report on the Lunatic Asylums in the Central Provinces for the Year 1892*, p. 1.
130. *Report on the Lunatic Asylums in the Central Provinces for the Year 1893* (Nagpur: Chief Secretariat Press, 1894), Statement IV, p. 10.
131. *Report on the Lunatic Asylums in the Central Provinces for the Year 1893*, pp. 2–3.
132. On the misinterpretation of God-given *jazb* for madness, see Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 17–18.
133. Hunter *et al.*, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, p. 309.
134. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, p. 19. On the social background of asylum assistants in early Victorian Britain (the industrial Midlands in particular), see L. D. Smith, 'Behind Closed Doors: Lunatic Asylum Keepers, 1800–60', *Social History of Medicine* 1, 3 (1988).
135. *Report on the Lunatic Asylums in the Central Provinces for the Year 1892*. On the Indian staff of colonial asylums, see Mills, *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism*, pp. 145–76. In colloquial Hindi/Urdu, *z* is often pronounced as *j*, which may have helped the confusion.
136. On the architecture of the Bhonsles of Nagpur, see K. M. Girhe, *Architecture of Bhonslas of Nagpur*, 2 vols. (Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, 2004).
137. On the history of the Nagpur Bhonsles up to 1854, including the eventual lapse of their state to the British in that year, see P. Gadre, *Bhosle of Nagpur and East India Company* (Jaipur: Publication Scheme, 1994).
138. On this theme somewhat earlier in the Deccan, see S. Gordon, 'Maratha Patronage of Muslim Institutions in Burhanpur and Khandesh', in D. Gilmartin and B. B. Lawrence (eds.), *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia* (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 2000).
139. In this respect, Tāj al-dīn represented the continuity in the colonial era of older customary associations between holy madmen and both Hindu and Muslim devotees. See D. Kinsley, '"Through the Looking Glass": Divine Madness in the Hindu Religious Tradition', *History of Religions*, **13**, 4 (1974) and J. McDaniel, *The Madness of the Saints: Ecstatic Religion in Bengal* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
140. Mahārājā Kishan Parshād, *Ānkh-wālā ānkh wālē kī talāsh mēn* (Meerut: Hāshimī Press, 1914). Kishan Parshād is also mentioned as a devotee (ʿ*aqīdatmand*) of Tāj al-dīn in the *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, where the *faqīr* is described as refusing a land grant which Kishan Parshād had

brought from the Nizam. See Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, p. 65.

141. Parshād, *Ānkh-wālā ānkh wālē kī talāsh mēn*, pp. 46–50. For a fuller study of this encounter, see N. S. Green, 'The Maharaja and the Madman: Patterns of the Cosmopolitan in "Colonial" Hyderabad', in S. Sheikh (ed.), *Devotional Expressions of South Asian Muslims* (London: I. B. Tauris, forthcoming).
142. On Tāj al-dīn's miracles, see Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 27–79 and Bharadwaja, *Shri Tajuddin Baba*, pp. 18–61.
143. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 36–7, 152–3.
144. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 32–3 and Bharadwaja, *Shri Tajuddin Baba*, p. 23.
145. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 111–12. Again, detailed regimental information is not provided in the Urdu sources.
146. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 49–50.
147. Anonymous, *Tazkira-e-Bābā Tāj al-dīn Awliyā*, pp. 115–20.
148. Reports on Bābā Jān appeared in the *Times of India* (Bombay/Poona edition) on 4 and 7 September 1926 (cuttings of these reports are pasted in a scrapbook in Lane-Smith (1901–38), file Z2). However, the main early biography of Bābā Jān is that of her follower, Dr Abdul Ghani, Munsiff, 'Hazrat Babajan of Poona', *The Meher Baba Journal* (Ahmadnagar/Bangalore), 1938–42 (repr. in *The Awakener* 8, 1 [New York, 1961]), ʿAbd al-Ghanī, who died in 1951, was one of several Muslim followers from the Poona region of the Parsi *faqīr* Meher Bābā who knew Bābā Jān personally. A short early account of her life also appears in C. B. Purdom, *The Perfect Master: Shri Meher Baba* (London: Williams & Norgate Ltd, 1937), pp. 19–21. These accounts, which generally overlap closely, are expanded in K. R. D. Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch: Hazrat Babajan* (Cambridge: Anthropographia Publications, 1986).
149. N. S. Green, 'A Persian Sufi in British India: The Travels of Mīrzā Hasan Safī ʿAlī Shāh (1251/1835–1316/1899)', *Iran: Journal of Persian Studies*, **42** (2004) and B. D. Metcalf, 'The Pilgrimage Remembered: South Asian Accounts of the Hajj', in D. F. Eickelman and J. Piscatori (eds.), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1990).
150. For a survey of such miracle stories, see N. S. Green, 'Saints, Rebels and Booksellers: Sufis in the Cosmopolitan Western Indian Ocean, *c.* 1850–1930', in K. Kresse and E. Simpson (eds.), *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean* (London: Hurst, 2007). On Indian pilgrims at the shrine of ʿAbd al-Qādir, see L. Massignon, 'Les Pèlerinages populaires à Baghdad', *Révue du Monde Musulman*, **6**, 12 (1908), p. 650.
151. *AK*, pp. 72–3.
152. The reports on Bābā Jan appeared in the *Times of India* on 4 and 7 September 1926 (accessed as cuttings in Lane-Smith [1901–38], file Z2). The *hajj* miracle is also recorded in Purdom, *The Perfect Master*, p. 19.
153. *Times of India* (Bombay edition), 4 and 7 September 1926.

154. Shepherd, *A Sufi Matriarch*, p. 47.
155. John Howison, *Foreign Scenes and Travelling Recreations*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1825), vol. II, pp. 177, 160. Howison (1797–1859) was a military surgeon in the service of the East India Company. See *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 15 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966–), vol. VIII, pp. 409–11.
156. Purdom, *The Perfect Master*, p. 20.
157. Meher Bābā is quoted in D. E. Stevens (ed.), *Listen Humanity* (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1957), pp. 64–5. Reference to Bābā Jān's sepoy followers is also found in Purdom, *The Perfect Master*, p. 115.
158. Brunton, *A Search in Secret India*, pp. 62–5.
159. Brunton, *A Search in Secret India*, p. 63. Given Brunton's peculiar career, bridging as it did the highbrow occultism of the Theosophical Society with the saturnine turn of the hippy movement, their meeting is testament to the connection between the counter-culture of the 1960s and the colonial culture of a generation earlier. For details of Brunton's career, see J. Masson, *My Father's Guru: A Journey through Spirituality and Disillusion* (London: HarperCollins, 1993).
160. On the patronage of such public spaces, see D. Willmer, 'Parsis and Public Space in 19th Century Bombay: A Different Formulation of "the Political" in a Non-European Context', *Critical Horizons*, **3**, 2 (2002).
161. Purdom, *The Perfect Master*, p. 21.
162. A local Parsi barrister and long-term devotee, Judge Khandalawalla, is cited in this more sceptical capacity in P. Brunton, *A Search in Secret India* (London: Rider & Co., n.d. [1934]), p. 62.
163. For an overview of British hemp policy, see H. C. Mookerjee, 'India's Hemp-Drug Policy under British Rule', *Modern Review* 84 (1948). For a wider study of imperial attitudes to cannabis, see J. H. Mills, *Cannabis Britannica: Empire, Trade, and Prohibition 1800–1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
164. Green, 'Mystical Missionaries in Hyderabad State'. On Iqbal and Islamic reform, see A. Schimmel, 'Iqbal in the Context of Indo-Muslim Mystical Reform Movements', in Y. Friedmann (ed.), *Islam in Asia*, vol. I, *South Asia* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984).
165. *AK*, pp. 28–9, 51–2.
166. D. Peers, 'Imperial Vice: Sex, Drink and the Health of British Troops in North Indian Cantonments, 1800–1858', in D. Killingray and D. Omissi (eds.), *Guardians of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) and D. Peers, 'The Raj's Other Great Game: Policing the Sexual Frontiers of the Indian Army in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', in A. Rao and S. Pierce (eds.), *Discipline and the Other Body: Correction, Corporeality, Colonialism* (Durham, Md.: Duke University Press, 2006).
167. J. H. Mills, 'Cannabis in the Commons: Colonial Networks, Missionary Politics and the Origins of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission 1893–4', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, **6**, 1 (2005). On the colonial reshaping of the culture and consumption of alcohol during this period, see D. Hardiman, 'From Custom to Crime: The Politics of Drinking in

Colonial South Gujarat', *Subaltern Studies*, **4** (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985).

168. Lieut.-Col. Henry Furey Wakefield, *Some of the Words, Deeds & Success of Havelock in the Cause of Temperance in India, An Address* (London: William Tweedie, 1861), p. 4.
169. Wakefield, *Some of the Words, Deeds & Success*, p. 16.
170. F. Rosenthal, *The Herb: Hashish versus Medieval Muslim Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971).
171. On the comparable disciplinary culture of the nineteenth-century Egyptian Army, see K. Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army, and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Chapter 3. On religious reform in the Moroccan Army at the end of the nineteenth century, see B. Dennerlein, 'South–South Linkages and Social Change: Moroccan Perspectives on Army Reform in the Muslim Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, **27**, 1 (2007), pp. 59–60.
172. S. Ramar Char, 'Education in Hyderabad', *Modern Review*, **66** (1939), p. 178.
173. Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, p. 92.
174. On the hybrid formation of this 'Hindustani' Urdu, see J. Majeed, '"The Jargon of Indostan": An Exploration of Jargon in Urdu and East India Company English', in P. Burke and R. Porter (eds.), *Languages and Jargons: Contributions to a Social History of Language* (London: Polity Press, 1995). Cf. Roy, *Brown Warriors*, pp. 238–40.
175. Pandey, *From Sepoy to Subedar*, p. vii. These remarks once again open up the debate on the authenticity of the text. At best, evidence suggests that it was written expressly for Sītā Rām's commander J. T. Norgate and, as such, shows a reflection of the attitudes known to be those of the army official.

CONCLUSIONS

1. W. R. Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
2. Here my analysis draws on the theory of religious economy. For an introduction to and case study of this model, see R. A. Chesnut, *Competitive Spirits: Latin America's New Religious Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
3. J. Howison, *Foreign Scenes and Travelling Recreations* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1825), vol. II, p. 176. On the grave of Colonel Patrick Maxwell, near Aurangabad, which achieved similar cultic fame, see P. Davies, *The Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India*, vol. II, *Islamic, Rajput, European* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 505. Davies also notes that Wallace later became known as Sāt Purūsh.
4. Capt. A. N. Scott, *Sketches in India; Photographic Pictures Taken at Hyderabad and Secunderabad, in the Madras Presidency* (London: Lovel Reeve, 1862), text opposite plate L.

5. On one such organisation, which also provided physical training for mill workers, see H. A. Tacherkar 'and others', *A Brief Sketch of the Work of the Kāmgār Hitwardhak Sabhha, Bombay* (Bombay: Indu-Prakash Press, 1919).
6. On the cultic impact of rail pilgrims (particularly on Orissa), see R. Ahuja, '"The Bridge-Builders": Some Notes on Railways, Pilgrimage and the British "Civilizing Mission", in Colonial India', in H. Fischer-Tiné and M. Mann (eds.), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India* (London: Anthem, 2004).
7. Homi K. Bhabha, 'Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817', *Critical Inquiry* 12, 1 (1985).
8. On colonial diglossia in a civilian context, see J. Majeed, '"The Jargon of Indostan": An Exploration of Jargon in Urdu and East India Company English', in P. Burke and R. Porter (eds.), *Languages and Jargons: Contributions to a Social History of Language* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).
9. However, for a problematisation of the origins of the name *Urdū*, see S. R. Faruqi, *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), Chapter 1.
10. On the activities of the Church Missionary Society elsewhere in the Nizam's State, see N. S. Green, 'Mystical Missionaries in Hyderabad State: Muʿīn Allāh Shāh and his Sufi Reform Movement', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, **41**, 2 (2005).
11. Field-Marshal Lord Birdwood, *Khaki and Gown, an Autobiography* (London: Ward, Lock & Co. Limited, 1941), pp. 65–6. I am grateful to Monawar Hussain for drawing my attention to this work.
12. *Afzal*, p. 29.
13. For a notable recent redressing of this lacuna, see A. Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion,1700–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).
14. Cf. D. B. Edwards, 'Mad Mullahs and Englishmen: Discourse in the Colonial Encounter', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, **31**, 4 (1989).
15. Revd W. B. Butler, *The Land of the Veda, being Personal Reminiscences of India* (New York: Philips & Hunt, 1871), p. 205.
16. On the decline of ecstatic *faqīr* cults in Pakistan, see J. W. Frembgen, 'Divine Madness and Cultural Otherness: *Dīwānas* and *Faqīrs* in Northern Pakistan', *South Asia Research*, **26**, 3 (2006) and S. McLoughlin and M. Khan, 'Ambiguous Traditions and Modern Transformations in Islam: The Waxing and Waning of an "Intoxicated" Cult in Mirpur', *Contemporary South Asia*, **15**, 3 (2006).
17. Sayyid Kamāl al-dīn Ahmad, *Tārīkh-e-Haydarābād Dakan aur Razākār* (Karachi: Educational Press, 1995).
18. M. Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition & Memory in the North West Frontier* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000).
19. M. Yousaf (ed.), *Pakistan's Freedom & Allama Mashriqi: Statements, Letters, Chronology of Khaksar Tehrik (Movement)* (Liverpool, NY: AMZ Publications, 2004).
20. On Zindapīr, see P. Werbner, *Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult* (London: Hurst, 2003).

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